

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ROBERTS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
MARCH 20, 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 March 20, 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
JaLayne Obert, Business Manager/Clerk

Guests: Katie Day, Katy Rausch, Reesa Herta, Ashley Boslet, Jen Larson, John Holdbrook, Peter Wisniewski, Caitlin Hall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

Michelle Swansborough asked for an addition to the minutes of the February 23, 2024 meeting to reflect that the attorney, Nyles Greer, stated when the public is asking for information, the district doesn't have to produce new documents.

Motion was made by Brandon Crane, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting February 23, 2024 as amended and special meeting February 22, 2024. (YES: Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

WARRANTS

Motion was made by Brandon Crane, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve warrants 49989 through 50061 as presented. (YES: Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jackie Douglas asked which trustee seats are open for election and was told it is Mariah Holdbrook and Brandon Crane's positions.

Mrs. Douglas asked if a levy of \$95,000 is going to cover what the district needs.

Mr. Ator stated most of the levy would be used for salaries with about 5% left for everything else.

Mrs. Douglas stated something she would like to try is to have local seniors come in and volunteer in the classrooms.

Sanford Langager stated if there is any year-end money, a new intercom system should be purchased.

Mr. Ator stated we have radios in each classroom and decided to go that direction instead of replacing the intercom system which would run about \$25,000.

Jen Larson and Peter Wisniewski stated the radio system works well.

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Mr. Ator stated the Activities Report was included in the board packet.

LITERACY REPORT

Caitlin Hall reported Kindergarten Roundup and Rocket Camp are scheduled in April and also preschool roundup.

Mrs. Hall stated the educational consultant conducted an inservice on how we learn and how we retain at the PIR on March 15. She stated we are waiting for more information on the home based program for the Early Literacy program and are ordering the screener needed for that program for preschool testing.

Mrs. Hall stated several staff members will be attending professional development trainings in April on exceptional children and early childhood education.

TEACHER REPORTS

Katy Rausch gave the teacher report for the month, stating she teaches fifth and sixth grade math and science.

Miss Rausch stated the fifth graders are working on writing science papers which also works on their writing skills. She added she has the NASA group for grades three through five and the students have had the opportunity to talk with experts on different subjects. She stated the science fair is coming up in April.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

STUDENT PETITION TO GRADUATE BY STATE REQUIREMENTS – Michelle Swansborough called for an executive session at 6:50 p.m. stating that the next item concerns an individual and it is her determination that the individual's right to privacy supersede the merits of public disclosure. She returned the meeting to regular session at 7:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Nick Dobbel, seconded by Mariah Holdbrook and carried unanimously to approve the student request to graduate by state requirements. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

STAFFING

REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE SABBATICAL REQUEST – Mr. Ator recommended extending Jon Milligan's sabbatical request by one year with a deadline to notify the school of his return on February 1, 2025, for the 25-26 school year.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried unanimously to

extend Jon Milligan's sabbatical request by one year with a deadline to notify the school of his return on February 1, 2025, for the 25-26 school year. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

REVIEW OF FORMAL COMPLAINT – Mr. Ator stated this item is to review the formal complaint procedure, not hear a formal complaint. He stated after listening to Nyles Greer at last month's meeting, it is important we understand the procedure and what has to happen before a complaint ever gets to the board level.

JaLayne Obert stated a grievance is a violation of state or federal law or board policy.

CERTIFIED NEGOTIATIONS – Mr. Ator stated if the levy passes, his recommendation is to give certified staff an 8% increase on the base, which results in a 10% raise with steps and lanes. He stated this is what we heard the community say they wanted.

Michelle Swansborough stated recruitment is more expensive than retention and keeping trained staff is a much better use of money.

Mr. Ator stated we have to find a particular person who fits a very specific niche when we hire people here and we need to reward these people.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried unanimously to approve giving the certified staff an 8% increase on the base salary, contingent upon the passage of the mill levy. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

NEW BUSINESS

PERMISSIVE LEVY RESOLUTION – Mr. Ator stated the district is required to publish in the newspaper a resolution of intent to impose an increase in levies for funds utilizing a permissive levy. He added the intent at this time is to not increase any of the permissive levies and asked for approval of the resolution (see attached).

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Mariah Holdbrook and carried unanimously to approve the Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Levies as presented. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO – none).

2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR – Mr. Ator recommended approval of the proposed school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year with a start date of August 14, 2024 for teachers, August 19 for students, and an end date of June 4, 2025.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried to approve the superintendent's recommendation for the school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year as presented. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel. NO—Holdbrook).

REVIEW OF LOCAL SUBDIVISION – Mr. Ator recommended approval of a local subdivision plan as it won't create overcrowding in our school.

Motion was made by Brandon Crane, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the Deer Meadow Subdivision as recommended by the superintendent. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

PLANNING FOR AG BUILDING ROOF – Mr. Ator stated although he isn't ready to make a recommendation yet, he did receive a bid from a local contractor on the labor for the ag shop roof.

FOOTBALL CO-OP RENEWAL WITH RED LODGE AND BELFRY – Mr. Ator recommended approval of the three-year football co-op with Red Lodge and Belfry.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the three-year football co-op with Red Lodge and Belfry. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

OLD BUSINESS

GENERAL FUND MILL LEVY RESOLUTION – Mr. Ator recommended approval of the ballot language and proposition for a General Fund mill levy for \$95,000 as follows:

PROPOSITION

Shall the board of trustees be authorized to impose an increase in local taxes to support the general fund in the amount of NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$95,000) per year which is approximately 30.42 mills, for the purpose of maintaining and operating the General Fund for FY25?

Passage of this proposal will increase the taxes on a home with a market value of \$100,000 by approximately \$41.07, on a home with a market value of \$300,000 by approximately \$123.20, and on a home with a market value of \$600,000 by approximately \$246.40. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs. The durational limit of the levy is permanent once approved by the voters, assuming the district levies that amount each year thereafter. However, lowering over-BASE tax levies in any year will lower the amount of permissively over-Base levies in subsequent years.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brandon Crane and carried unanimously to approve the ballot language and proposition for the mill levy as recommended by the superintendent. (YES—Swansborough, Crane, Bertolino, Dobbel, Holdbrook. NO—none).

Mr. Ator stated in the packet he included a letter from the board about the levy to be included in the newsletter.

Brandon Crane stated we also need to put together a fact sheet.

Mariah Holdbrook stated we also need information about the performance of our students.

Mr. Ator stated we need to hold the next community meeting before absentee ballots go out and form a committee to put together information for that meeting.

It was decided the next community meeting will be held on Thursday, April 11, at 7:00 p.m. in the new gym.

ADJOURNMENT

Michelle Swansborough adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Board Chair

District Clerk

Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Levies

As an essential part of its budgeting process, the Roberts School District #5 Board of Trustees is authorized by law to impose levies to support its budget. The Roberts School District #5 Board of Trustees estimates the following increases/decreases in revenues and mills for the funds noted below for the next school fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, using certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year as provided to the district:

Fund Supported	Estimated Change in Revenues*	Estimated Change in Mills*	Estimated Impact Home of \$100,000*	Estimated Impact Home of \$200,000*
Bus Depreciation	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Transportation	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Tuition	\$0.00	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Building Reserve Elementary	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Building Reserve High School	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Adult Education	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase
Total	\$0.00 increase	0 mill increase	\$0.00 increase	\$0.00 increase

***Impacts above are based on current certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year.**

Regarding the building reserve levy referenced above, the following are school facility maintenance projects anticipated to be completed at this time:

1. Construction and Repairs of Existing Facilities
2. Electrical and Mechanical System Upgrades
3. Weatherization of Existing Facilities
4. General Grounds and Facilities Maintenance