

Trout Creek School District #6 Board Meeting Minutes

6/12/2023

In Attendance: Carolyn Nesbitt, Michael Linderman, Zachary Hannum, Marian Stonehocker, Preston Wenz, David Sorenson, Michael Boys, Gabriele Ohning, Alicia Wenz, Beckie Doyle, Debra Cashman, Renna Mummert, Monte Nesbitt, Ruth Allen, Kaitlyn Purdy, Ed Cashman, Nick Lawyer, via zoom: Veronica Calyer, Sam Wenz.

***These minutes were drafted by Ms. McPherson from notes graciously taken by Mrs. Stonehocker in Ms. McPherson's absence from this meeting.**

I. Call to order

Mrs. Nesbitt called to order the meeting of the Trout Creek School Board at 6:00 pm on 6/12/2023 at Trout Creek School.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Nesbitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Recognition of Visitors/Public Comment

Mrs. Nesbitt asked for public comment:

Mrs. Wenz read a prepared letter tendering her resignation. She thanked Mr. Linderman for his support. She stated she feels that her family has been harassed and targeted, especially around the time of Board elections. She also referenced her hiring when Mrs. Nesbitt was on the hiring committee and voted to hire her but upon consideration for re-election, Mrs. Nesbitt voted Nay. Mrs. Wenz stated that Mrs. Nesbitt had cited "nepotism" as the reason in the Board meeting on March 14, 2023. Both Mrs. Nesbitt and Mr. Hannum both refuted that claim. Mrs. Wenz then stated that Mrs. Nesbitt had voiced that to Mr. Wenz in a private conversation after that meeting. Mr. Hannum asked who else was on that interview committee and Mrs. Wenz stated it was Mr. Linderman. Mrs. Nesbitt stated that she did not indicate nepotism as being part of why she voted not to re-elect Mrs. Wenz for an FY24 teaching contract. Mr. Wenz stated that the conversation with Mrs. Nesbitt did take place after the meeting.

Mr. Cashman spoke stating that with Mrs. Wenz leaving, there will be only one credentialed teacher on staff - Mrs. Cashman.

Ms. Ohning spoke in support of all support staff stating they are the backbone of the school and are ignored. She stated that hourly employees don't get paid when school is off for breaks and holidays.

IV. Approval of the Agenda as Presented

Action Read By: Mrs. Nesbitt; Motion Made By: Mr. Linderman; 2nd: Mr. Hannum

On the poll of the Board, the motion carried unanimously.

V. Approval of the Warrants

Action Read By: Mrs. Nesbitt; Motion Made By: Mr. Hannum; 2nd: Mrs. Stonehocker

On the poll of the Board, the motion carried unanimously.

VI. Approval of the Minutes from 5/9/23 S and 5/31/23

Action Read By: Mrs. Nesbitt; Motion Made By: Mr. Linderman; 2nd: Mrs. Stonehocker

On the poll of the Board, the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from 5/9/23 R - TABLED for editing.

VII. Administrative Report

Mr. Wenz reported on the following:

Academics

Grade levels are being readjusted for the coming year after speaking and working with Yvonne Fields, our OPI liaison

K/1

2/3

4/5

6-8

Waiting on final state test score results

- preliminary results are better than last year

Personnel

Have a recommendation for this past year's 5/6 position but waiting on one more piece of information

Open positions as of today: 4/5, SpEd, 1/2

I have a recommendation coming for the past 5/6 position but am waiting on one more piece of information before doing so.

Curriculum

The curriculum co-op we have been with (Northwest Curriculum Co-op) is going away. Too many districts have withdrawn from it.

I recommend we go with MSSA (Montana Small Schools Alliance for the curriculum part. It actually is cheaper.

Extracurriculars

I will be advertising for coaches for our activities

Mr. Hannum asked how we can have teacher consistency if the teachers are being moved around so much. From a parent perspective, it is hard on students and nothing will be done the same next year. Mr. Wenz stated the Board doesn't want consistency. Mr. Wenz presented an email from OPI regarding grade level realignment. Mr. Linderman stated that we are struggling to get certified teachers.

VIII. Maintenance Report

Mr. Boys reported the following:

Plumber TBD
Fixed lighting in several classrooms
Burned two of the burn piles

Inspections

Reached out to the Safety and Health Specialist from Montana Consultation Program, we are currently working on scheduling July 11, 12 or the 13th.

Trainings

Got a hold of Rick Paul, our sales rep for Wenco, he wants to meet with me for a day to train me on recoating the floors.

Upcoming

Just received water test containers on 6/8/23, will be performing that soon.

Mr. Linderman asked if there was a "summer wish list." Mr. Boys stated that there was not.

IX. District Clerk Update

- A. Financial reports were provided by the Clerk for review.
- B. Authorization to pay any lingering FY23 warrants on 6/30/23 - TABLED

X. Discussion (D) & Action (A) Items

A. Curriculum Co-op Change - Mr Wenz informed the Board of the dissolution of the Northwest Montana Education Cooperative. He suggested we go with Missoula Small Schools Alliance as they offer the same services and are less expensive.

Action Read By: Mrs. Nesbitt; Motion Made By: Mr. Linderman; 2nd: Mr. Hannum

On the poll of the Board, the motion carried unanimously.

B. Personnel Recommendations - TABLED

C. Property and Liability Insurance - Mr. Wenz presented the renewal for FY24 for Board approval per policy.

Action Read By: Mrs. Nesbitt; Motion Made By: Mr. Linderman; 2nd: Mr. Hannum

On the poll of the Board, the motion carried unanimously.

D. Clark Fork Soccer - Nick Lawyer presented information from the Clark Fork Soccer program.

E. Garden - Mrs. Stonehocker asked Mr. Wenz about the balance left of the garden grant and student participation. She also asked about incorporating the garden produce into the kitchen and what happens to surplus produce.

Mr. Wenz responded that there is about \$2,700 left with no “use by: date. The students did plant seeds in their classrooms. Produce use in the kitchen has not been finalized because the garden soil has not been approved by the County Sanitarian. There are plans to take produce to the Farmer’s Market and then offered to community members.

F. 8th Grade Graduation - Mrs. Nesbitt asked Mr. Wenz why the 7/8 grade teacher was not present at the 8th grade graduation. Mr. Wenz stated that she had reasons why she couldn’t get up in front of people to speak.

G. Bike Rodeo - Mrs. Nesbitt asked Mr. Wenz how the bike rodeo went. Mr. Wenz repeated that “we were running out of time and the staff was given the responsibility of the bike rodeo.” He also stated the older students went on a bike ride to the Frog Pond. Mr. Linderman advised putting it on the school calendar for next year to make sure there is pre-planning so that it happens. He also suggested involving law enforcement for safety.

H. School District Property - Mrs. Nesbitt asked Mr. Wenz about the textbooks being thrown away without Board approval, per Policy #7251. Mr. Wenz stated he didn’t think he needed Board approval. He also stated he had advertised them to give them away in various places but no one wanted them. He stated he also tried to give them away with no response.

- I. Matric Modification for Part-Time and Paraprofessional Staff** - Mrs. Nesbitt read the matrix information. The matrix was put into place on 5/10/2022. It was decided to keep as is.
- J. Mummert Request** - Mrs. Nummert spoke of her responsibilities being more than just head cook. She stated she only wants credit for the years of experience she has served the District. She is currently only recognized at 8 years of experience. She starts FY24 at year 17 with the District. Mrs. Mummert inquired as to why she was only placed at step 8. Mr. Wenz stated that it was an oversight at the time of matrix implementation. Mr. Hannum asked Mrs. Mummert to put her request in through Mr. Wenz. **TABLED**
- K. Contracts** - Mr. Wenz stated that not all the contracts had been handed out before the year's end. He also stated it was the Clerk's job to get them handed out. Mr. Hannum stated that it is his understanding that the Clerk is waiting on critical paperwork from staff before contracts could be drawn up.
- L. Raises** - Mr. Wenz shared that raises are a joint decision of the business manager and the Board. Mrs. Cashman asked what happens if there is no union. She stated she has worked in districts where there was no union. Mr. Colyer stated that she has already contacted Union Rep Alex and he was going to call Mr. Wenz and Ms. McPherson. Mr. Linderman stated he feels the Board needs MTSBA input if the union is dissolved. Mr. Hannum feels there should be a committee of staff if there was no union. Mr. Linderman stated that the classified staff are all underpaid. Mr. Hannum agreed. Mr. Wenz stated that a 1% raise had been applied to certified staff last year, as well as a stipend provided. He also shared that a 4% raise had been voted on for the clerk. Mrs. Cashman stated that yes, the raise was 1% this year, but the cost of living increased by 13%. Mr. Linderman stated he feels the District should develop a budget committee including the superintendent, staff, and the Board. Mr. Hannum stated that he doesn't understand why the clerk is being targeted. He stated that she deserved the raise. Mrs. Doyle shared that a lot of staff are not coming back because of wages. Mr. Hannum reiterated that classified staff deserve a raise. Mrs. Cashman stated she believes that the District can't find teachers because of the salaries and that the school was falling apart. Mr. Cashman asked if the Board realizes that they will only have one certified teacher now that Mrs. Wenz has resigned. Mr. Linderman shared that it would be good if we could run a levy. Mr. Hannum talked about permissible and non-permissible levies. He stated the District needs to think about what is best for the facility and about how we can get public support. Mrs.

