

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ROBERTS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5  
MAY 23, 2024**

The special 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 23, 2024 in the library at the Roberts School.

**ATTENDANCE**

Michelle Swansborough, Chair  
Joel Bertolino  
Michael Bissonnette (online at 6:20 p.m.)  
Brad Norman

Absent, Nick Dobbel, Vice Chair

Alex Ator, Superintendent  
JaLayne Obert, Business Manager/Clerk

Guests: Sarah Clark, Denyse Vanek, Katy Rausch, Casey Kircher, Lacy Kircher, John Holdbrook, Caitlin and Stella Oakland, Sanford Langager, Nancy Langager, Jacquie Jessen, Jen Larson, Kennedee Blankenship, Jackie Ronning, Peter Wisniewski, Misty Pitts

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jen Larson stated she has been the 7-12 science teacher and NASA advisor for two years at Roberts School. She read a letter to the board outlining signs of a good administration and signs of a toxic workplace. She stated the poor pay scale is not the only reason we keep losing teachers.

Jacqui Jessen stated she has taught 14 years in three different school districts and what she sees happening in Roberts is the community support is gone, camaraderie is gone and state scores aren't indicative of the growth we are seeing in students. She stated we need to come together as a community as we need each other.

John Holdbrook stated he hasn't heard anything about a committee to review the Road to Recovery document.

Michelle Swansborough stated Nick Dobbel and Michael Bissonnette will be serving on that committee.

(Michael Bissonnette joined the meeting online at 6:20 p.m.)

Sanford Langager stated he feels the meeting should be open to public comment on action items.

John Holdbrook stated more information should be provided on agenda items.

Caitlin Oakland stated information should be provided in layman's terms so it understandable.

Steve Keebler stated discussion on an agenda item comes after there is a motion and second.

### **STAFFING**

**RESIGNATIONS** – Mr. Ator recommended acceptance of letters of resignation from Caitlin Hall, Jen Larson, and Rylee Lloyd.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brad Norman and carried unanimously to accept the resignation of Caitlin Hall, Jen Larson, and Rylee Lloyd. (YES—Swansborough, Dobbel, Bertolino, Bissonnette, Norman. NO--none).

Michelle Swansborough thanked all three for their service to the school.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**CERTIFIED NEGOTIATIONS** – Mr. Ator stated certified staff are asking for a two-year contract with a 4% increase to the base and a reduction in the number of PIR days. He stated we do have funds such as the Medicaid Reimbursement fund and ESSER funds that could pay some administrative costs early in the year.

Michelle Swansborough stated reducing the number of PIR days is probably doable but what we can offer is a one-year contract with 1% on the base with a bonus at the end of this year to give the teachers money we can't offer next year. She stated a 1% increase puts us \$22,000 in the hole.

Mr. Ator asked if we look at cutting another position.

Joel Bertolino stating cutting another position isn't what we want to do.

**CSCT CONTRACT RENEWAL** – Motion was made by Joel Bertolino to approve the contract with YBGR for CSCT services for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion died for lack of a motion.

Michelle Swansborough stated perhaps this should be tabled until the next meeting.

Michael Bissonnette stated he would second the motion so there could be discussion.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino and seconded by Michael Bissonnette to approve the contract with YBGR for CSCT services for the 2024-2025 school year.

Michelle Swansborough stated we received letters of support from five elementary teachers.

Renee Huffman of the state CSCT program stated the primary goal of the program is to help high risk students be successful by providing mental health services.

Michelle Swansborough stated she is tabling this item until next month. She stated we also need to look at a policy for disciplinary action.

Motion was made by Brad Norman, seconded by Michael Bissonnette and carried unanimously to approve renewal of non-tenured teacher Theresa Kosel. (YES—Swansborough, Bissonnette, Norman. NO—none. Abstained: Bertolino (conflict of interest)).

CLASSIFIED STAFF – Mr. Ator stated the classified staff negotiated a two-year contract with a dollar per hour raise in each year. He recommended renewal of the following classified staff with a \$1 per hour increase: Jeff Krook, Kelly Songstad, Skye Mitchell, Jim Burows, and Tanya Wright.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Michael Bissonnette and carried unanimously to approve renewal of the following classified staff with a \$1 per hour increase: Jeff Krook, Kelly Songstad, Skye Mitchell, Jim Burows, and Tanya Wright. (YES—Swansborough, Bertolino, Bissonnette, Norman. NO—none).

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brad Norman and carried unanimously to approve renewal of the following classified staff with a \$1 per hour increase: Randy DeVries, Roly DeVries. (YES—Swansborough, Bertolino, Norman. NO—none. Abstained – Bissonnette (conflict of interest)).

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF – JaLayne Obert stated she and Nancy Langager were also granted a two-year contract with a \$1 per hour increase each year. She stated because of concerns with next year's budget, they would like to decline the \$1 per hour increase and reduce each of their salaries by \$246.40, the amount of tax increase on a \$600,00 home if the levy had passed.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino, seconded by Brad Norman and carried unanimously to accept the offer from JaLayne Obert and Nancy Langager to decline the \$1 per hour increase and reduce each of their salaries by \$246.40, the amount of tax increase on a \$600,00 home if the levy had passed. (YES—Swansborough, Bertolino, Bissonnette, Norman. NO—none).

**ADJOURNMENT**

Michelle Swansborough adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

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Board Chair

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District Clerk