

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ROBERTS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5  
APRIL 15, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, Roberts School District No. 5, was called to order by Sarah DeVries at 6:00 p.m. on April 15, 2020 in the gymnasium at the Roberts School.

**ATTENDANCE**

Sarah DeVries, Chair (via teleconferencing)  
Joel Bertolino, Vice Chair  
Tyler Allen (via teleconferencing)  
Mariah Holdbrook (via teleconferencing)  
Michelle Swansborough (via teleconferencing)

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

GUESTS: Caitlin Hall, Jessica Parpart, Lindsay Thompson, Misty Pitts, Sarah Shoopman, Tina Albers, Jackie Ronning, Nancy Langager, Anna Prinkki, Kelley Guasp (all teleconferencing)

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

Motion was made by Michelle Swansborough, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 18 and March 25, 2020 meetings as presented. (YES –DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none)

**CLAIMS, SEQUENCE, AND VOIDED CHECKS**

Motion was made by Tyler Allen, seconded by Michelle Swansborough and carried unanimously to approve warrants 45964 (voided check) and warrants 45991 through 46050 as presented. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

**TEACHER REPORTS**

Jessica Parpart, Tina Albers, and Misty Pitts gave teacher reports for the month.

Ms. Albers stated this is her first year teaching PE at Roberts and she feels it went really well. She stated she is in the process of putting together a list of what is done at each grade level.

Ms. DeVries expressed appreciation for Ms. Albers enthusiasm and all she's done this year.

Mrs. Pitts reported she is almost finished with her practicum for her library certification. She stated she is helping with the pre-school this year and is still sending material out to them.

Mrs. Pitts stated in the digital academy classes, only 8 of 32 classes are on track and zeroes will be put in for assignments not done on Monday so students have some work to do.

Mrs. Pitts stated we had two book fairs this year and she has been updating the juvenile section, both fiction and non-fiction. She stated she is changing the way she groups books on the shelves and is looking at new reference materials, both in books and on-line.

Ms. DeVries asked if the students in digital academy are having trouble with the internet, could they come to the school to get that work done.

Mr. Ator stated the Governor is asking that no students be allowed in the building at this time. He added he doesn't think too many students are having trouble with connecting with the internet, they just aren't making it a priority.

Ms. DeVries thanked Mrs. Pitts for all her work for the school and students.

Ms. Parpart stated she teaches math and science for grades four through six. She stated the Eureka math curriculum has been adopted for the sixth grade and next year she will use it at grades four and five also.

Mrs. Holdbrook stated it has been fun to watch Ms. Parpart grow as a first year teacher.

Mrs. Swansborough stated her students are really enjoying her classroom.

Mr. Ator stated Ms. Parpart is doing some great things with assessment. He thanked all three teachers for what they bring to the district.

## **STAFFING**

RESIGNATION – Mr. Ator stated he received a letter of resignation from Ashley Devine and

Mr. Burows is currently hurt and at home. He stated that leaves us with no custodians at the present time. He added he would like to publicly thank Ashley Devine for her work and dedication to the district.

Motion was made by Tyler Allen, seconded by Michelle Swansborough and carried unanimously to accept the letter of resignation from Ashley Devine and thank her for her work for the district. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTION – Mr. Ator stated because of the health risks involved, the County Superintendent of Schools Lori Lynde has cancelled the school trustee elections scheduled for May 5, 2020. He stated this gives us a little more time to promote a levy.

MT COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY STATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SUBGRANT – Mr. Ator stated the grant application for the second round of the literacy grant is due on Friday and thanked the grant leadership for working on it. He added the grant would be \$250,000 per year for four years and asked the board for a motion in support of the application.

Motion was made by Michelle Swansborough, seconded by Mariah Holdbrook and carried unanimously to approve the following statement of support for the literacy grant application: The Roberts School Board will support the advancement of all Roberts students and staff in all areas connected to literacy by supporting grant goals. Additionally, we will support the school administration and instructional coach to ensure the implementation of grant goals and the use of the continuous school improvement cycle. Finally, if administrative or staff turnover happens during the timeline of the Montana Comprehensive Literacy State Development Subgrant, the board ensures to hire new staff who support literacy instruction in all areas and grant goals. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

SPRING ORDER CONTRACTS – Mr. Ator asked for approval of the following yearly contracts:

JPT for health insurance, Renewal Option 1, increase of \$46.13 per month to \$774.61 for single coverage.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve Renewal Option 1 with the Joint Powers Trust for health insurance for the 2020-2021 year. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. No—none).

MSGIA for Workers Compensation – Mr. Ator recommended continuing with MSGIA with a two-year renewal for Workers Compensation.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve a two-year renewal with MSGIA for Workers Compensation. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

POWERSCHOOL for grades, attendance, lunch, student records – Mr. Ator recommended renewal with PowerSchool at a cost of \$3494.10.

Motion was made by Mariah Holdbrook, seconded by Michelle Swansborough and carried unanimously to approve the yearly fee of \$3494.10 for PowerSchool. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

C&C ACCOUNTING for accounting software – Mr. Ator recommended approval of the renewal with C & C Accounting for \$4550.00 for accounting software.

Motion was made by Michelle Swansborough, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the renewal with C&C Accounting for \$4550.00. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Holdbrook, Swansborough. NO—none).

**OLD BUSINESS**

CLASSIFIED NEGOTIATIONS – Mr. Ator stated the negotiators for the classified staff haven't met yet.

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

Mr. Ator stated this is Mariah Holdbrook's last meeting as she has moved from the district. He stated he greatly appreciates what she and Luke have done for this district and him personally.

Mr. Ator stated we will have to start looking for a replacement for Mrs. Holdbrook's position on the Board.

ACTIVITIES REPORT – Sarah Shoopman reported the MHSAA has put all spring sports on hold until April 24 and has put a hard deadline of May 4 for cancellation of the season if schools haven't reopened.

Mrs. Shoopman reported McKenzie Pitts and Emma DeVries were both chosen as All-Conference selections for basketball and added she is looking forward to their senior year in both volleyball and basketball.

Mr. Ator stated we were able to get in a couple of games in for junior high boys' basketball.

TRUSTEE ELECTION BY ACCLAMATION –Mr. Ator stated Joel Bertolino and Tyler Allen have both been elected by acclamation for their trustee positions.

DISTANCE LEARNING UPDATE – Mr. Ator stated he will continue to say what a phenomenal staff we have and he appreciates the work that is being done on educating the students during this difficult time. He stated we are more or less taking a quality versus quantity approach to the work being given to students.

GRADUATION – Mr. Ator reported he has spoken with the senior class and they are looking at a graduation date of June 20 using a drive-in type setting.

Mrs. Swansborough stated she would like to thank the teachers for the job they are doing as she has talked to other in different schools who aren't supporting their students as well.

Mrs. Holdbrook stated she is thankful for the emphasis that has been put on technology in this district as it is serving us well.

MEETING DATES – Mr. Ator stated future scheduled meeting dates are May 20, June 17, July 15, and August 19.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. DeVries called for adjournment at 7:42 p.m.

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Board Chair

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District Clerk

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ROBERTS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5  
APRIL 27, 2020**

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Roberts School District No. 5, Roberts, Montana was called to order by Chair Sarah DeVries at 6:00 p.m. in the gymnasium at the Roberts School.

**ATTENDANCE**

Sarah DeVries, Chair  
Joel Bertolino, Vice Chair  
Michelle Swansborough

ABSENT: Tyler Allen

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

GUESTS: Jon Milligan, present at meeting  
Teleconferencing: Sarah Shoopman, Dr. Bill George, Peter Wisniewski, Anna Prinkki, Brianne Payne, Jessica Parpart, Charlotte DeVries, Erin Koch, John Bassett, Jessie Croft, Kelley Guasp, Lindsay Thompson, Susan Fischer, Nancy Langager, Tina Albers, Jackie Ronning, Brian Frank, Brandon Crane, Kathleen Kuntz, Doug Whitehead, Misty Pitts, Shannyn Wilson, Tim Cooper, Erica Cooper

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Ator stated with the Governor's decision that schools could re-open on May 7 with proper procedures for social distancing, he invited Dr. Bill George, Carbon County Health Officer, to give information on COVID-19.

Dr. George thanked Mr. Ator for inviting him to the meeting to give information on the current situation in Carbon County with COVID-19. He stated Carbon County got on the ball early with the pandemic and it has really made a difference.

Dr. George stated to date there have been six cases of the coronavirus in Carbon County, none of which were community acquired. Right now in Montana there are less than 100 active cases and there have been 14 deaths. Social distancing and closures resulted in low numbers for the state.

Dr. George stated he has never seen anything spread as quickly or be as lethal as this virus and no one has immunity. He stated with the Spanish Flu, closing schools helped to stop the spread of the disease and it is helping with this pandemic. He stated there is an argument for partially reopening school if there is a need to help at-risk students and we can do that in Montana because of the low numbers. He added asymptomatic carriers can cause 20% to 50% of cases and we have to learn to live with this virus as it is going to be around for a while.

Dr. George stated the use of masks is based on data on other viruses and they are helpful in protecting other people. He added Montana is in a good position with access to testing supplies.

Anna Prinkki asked Dr. George if he has an overall recommendation on whether or not to re-open school.

Dr. George stated he is very impressed with what the district has been doing but we will have more data on the virus in the fall.

Tim Cooper asked if there is any chance this is what could have made some of our children sick in November, December, and January.

Dr. George stated there are some who feel that could have happened.

Jon Milligan stated we could see the virus go up and down in the fall.

Dr. George stated it is probably safe to partially reopen if proper guidelines on social distancing and wearing masks are followed and may even be helpful in getting students used to doing things differently. But there will be much better information and guidance in the fall.

Mrs. Swansborough asked what happens if a student refuses to wear a mask

Dr. George stated masks have to worn for the protection of others.

Mr. Ator stated we are understaffed for custodial staff right now and asked how often things need to be wiped down.

Dr. George stated daily cleaning should be sufficient.

Ms. DeVries asked if students can have breaks from wearing the masks.

Dr. George stated it wouldn't be a good idea.

Mr. Ator asked how hard social distancing is for kids.

Dr. George stated it is close to impossible.

Mr. Ator asked if re-opening for full or half-days would be better.

Dr. George stated he doesn't know but added he is available to the district at any time.

Mr. Ator thanked Dr. George for joining the meeting and presenting the information in a manner understandable by the general public.

Caitlin Hall stated daycare is an issue for them as there is nothing available for their youngest child.

Mr. Ator stated we have a number of teachers who won't be returning if we open back up.

## **UPDATED ELECTION RESOLUTION**

Mr. Ator recommended approval of the updated election resolution for July 7, 2020. Motion was made by Michelle Swansborough, seconded by Joel Bertolino and carried unanimously to approve the following election resolution calling for the election on July 7, 2020. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Swansborough. NO—none). (see attached)

## **ROBERTS SCHOOL PLAN FOR REMAINDER OF SCHOOL YEAR**

Mr. Ator stated he surveyed the staff and parents of all but four families representing five students about how to continue with holding school. He stated 63% of parents, 91% of teachers, and 83% of students were in favor of finishing the school year with distance learning. He stated he has three requests from staff to continue to self-quarantine and concern has been expressed with the lack of daycare so we would have to cover some staff if we were to re-open.

Mr. Ator stated he doesn't think it makes sense educationally to re-open the school for the rest of this year although he does see some benefit of getting the students used to social distancing. He stated if we were to re-open, staff would have to stop doing distance education and there are students who would not come back into the school building this spring. He stated there could be some enrichment and remedial activities but bringing the students back into almost a police state would be hard on them and the staff.

Jon Milligan stated he is proud to be part of this school and the leadership of Mr. Ator and the board has been incredible but he would love to give the students some training on how to go on from now.

Mr. Ator stated we could still do some of those activities.

Lindsay Thompson stated it would be painful to come back this spring and have to distance from the students and that would probably create another level of anxiety. She stated some students also wouldn't come back and how would she educate those children.

Motion was made by Joel Bertolino to continue this school year with distance education and make an effort to have options to bring students in for enrichment activities but make it optional.

Mrs. Swansborough stated she can't imagine trying to choose between educating your child and putting a roof over their head. She added she is worried about the at-risk students who need the help of their teachers.

Caitlin Hall stated we all have the same concerns with those students.

## **RECESS**

Ms. DeVries called for a recess at 8:12 p.m. She returned the meeting to regular session at 8:26 p.m.

Mr. Ator reported during the break he was contacted by two more staff members who potentially would not come to work if the school is re-opened this spring.

Michelle Swansborough seconded Joel Bertolino's motion.

Ms. DeVries asked if there are teachers willing to come in and do enrichment activities.

Mr. Ator stated any activities at the school would have to be with proper distancing, probably starting with the older students, but teachers have indicated interest.

Mrs. Swansborough stated there would need to be a limit on the number of students who could come in and it would have to be clear that masks have to be worn.

Mr. Bertolino stated he would amend his motion to continue this school year with distance education and make an effort to have options to optionally bring students in for enrichment activities, ensuring all COVID 19 safety measures for the current phase are being observed and enforced. Mrs. Swansborough seconded the amendment and it carried unanimously. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Swansborough. NO—none).

The motion as amended was voted on and carried unanimously. (YES—DeVries, Bertolino, Allen, Swansborough. NO—none).

**DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY**

Mr. Ator asked that a special meeting be called for the declaration of emergency to give him time to collect everything needed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. DeVries called for adjournment at 8:45 p.m.

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Board Chair

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District Clerk

**TRUSTEE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN ELECTION**  
(Regular School Election, One Voting Location)

**BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Trustees for School District No. 5, Carbon County, State of Montana, will hold the Annual Regular School Election on Tuesday, the 7th day of July, 2020, which date is not less than seventy (70) days after the passage of this resolution.

The election will be conducted by:

Mail Ballot     Poll Election (the polls will be open from 12:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.)

The purpose of the election is the approval of additional levies to operate and maintain the General fund for FY21.

If it is later determined that any portion of the election is not required, the Board of Trustees authorizes JaLayne Obert, election administrator, to cancel that portion of the election in accordance with [13-1-304](#) and [20-3-313](#), MCA.

The following voting locations will be used for the election and the three electors of this district who are qualified to vote at such election are hereby appointed to act as judges at the election at each voting place as follows:

**Voting Location and Address: Roberts Fire Hall, 3 South 1st Street, Roberts MT 59070**

- | Election Judge    | Address                               |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Jane Zumbrun,  | 8769 Hwy 212, Roberts MT 59070        |
| 2. Sally DeSarro, | 212 Cottonwood Road, Roberts MT 59070 |
| 3. Connie Bell,   | 53 Bell Road, Roberts MT 59070        |

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the clerk of this school district is hereby directed to notify the above named election judges of their appointment and to notify the county election administrator of the date of holding said election, and request the clerk to close regular registration and to prepare and furnish election materials as required by law. If any of these judges should not be able to serve, the election administrator will choose a replacement from certified judges.

No further proceedings were conducted relating to the election.

Print Name of Board Chair	Signature of Board Chair
Print Name of Clerk	Signature of Clerk

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.