

1 **Stevensville Public Schools**
2 **School District #2**
3 **300 Park Avenue**
4 **Stevensville, Montana 59870**
5 **Telephone: (406) 777-5481**
6 **Fax: (406)258-1246**

7
8 **Special Board Meeting**

9 **April 25, 2024**

7:00 pm

Music Center Choir Room

10
11 **1. Opening of Meeting – Call to Order – Salute to Flag – Roll Call**

12 Chairwoman Cathi Cook called the meeting to order in the MPR Choir Room. Cathi led
13 the Pledge of Allegiance. The trustees present were Dan Mullan, Ben Meyer, Tony Hudson,
14 Stephanie Esch, Jennifer Gunterman, Billy Donaldson, and Kris McKoy. Superintendent Dave
15 Thennis, Business Manager/Clerk Christy McLaren were present.

16 **2. Recognize Visitors/Public Comment**

17 Board Chair Cathi Cook indicated that there has been a rumor recently that Stevensville
18 School District was going to discontinue athletics and she wants to reassure everyone that this is
19 not even a possibility. There will still be athletics for FY24-25.

20 Trustee Jennifer Gunterman indicates that the DECA team arrived in L.A. today for their
21 competition.

22 Trustee Ben Meyer commented on the student that would be attending National History
23 Day this summer.

24 Public Comment

25 Vicki Motley, teacher, commented that Robert Dobell the Superintendent of Lone Rock
26 School District was recently diagnosed with leukemia. He is at St. Patrick's Hospital in room 557
27 and would love to have visitors and cards.

28 Trustee Jennifer Gunterman indicated that Superintendent Dobell will be receiving 30 days
29 of continuous chemotherapy. He is working remotely.

30 **3. Approval of Minutes**

31 Trustee Ben Meyer indicated that in the last sentence of the minutes, the letter “i” needed
32 to be added to the word “exited”.

33 Billy Donaldson motioned to approve the closed session minutes for March 12, 2024, with
34 the change presented. Ben Meyer seconded the motion. All trustees voted aye. Motion passed.

35 **4. Approval of Claims**

36 There were none.

37 **5. Information Items**

38 **A. Business Manager – Budget Report**

39 Christy McLaren, Business Manager reviewed the Summary Budget Reports for Elementary
40 and High School and answered questions. She indicated that she would provide a breakdown on
41 object code #300 & 350 for the trustees at a future board meeting so that they could see what
42 was being expensed in each category.

43 **B. Consideration to add a full-year of American Government for high school** 44 **graduation**

45 Superintendent Thennis indicated that during previous board meetings questions about
46 American Government courses were discussed. Currently, students must complete one semester
47 of American Government to fulfill graduation requirements. The board packet included the
48 recommendations from the high school social studies department for the trustees to consider.

49 Trustee Dan Mullan commented on the thoroughness of the report provided by the social
50 studies department. Trustee Ben Meyer believes the district needs to work toward a textbook
51 rotation like the uniform rotation that the district has for the athletic department.

52 Trustee Tony Hudson asked if all departments could provide information like this moving
53 forward to the board.

54

55 **6. Consent Agenda**

56 **A. Employment** **All employment is pending completion of satisfactory*
57 *background checks.*

58 **i. Kathleen Braverman – ESY (Extended School Year) Special Education**
59 **Teacher**

- 60 ii. **Robert Sonsteng -Intramural Elementary Basketball Coach**
- 61 iii. **Brie Kuchel – Intramural Elementary Basketball Coach**
- 62 iv. **Debbie Stevens – Kinder Camp - Paraprofessional**
- 63 v. **Paige Bierly – Kinder Camp - Paraprofessional**
- 64 vi. **Shylah Poling – Kinder Camp - Teacher**
- 65 vii. **Cejay Paulsen – Kinder Camp – Teacher**
- 66 viii. **Jennifer Walthall – Kinder Camp – Teacher**
- 67 **B. Resignations**
- 68 i. **Steve Lewis – Middle School Activities Director**
- 69 ii. **Cecily Jarvis - Elementary School Teacher**
- 70 iii. **Grace Sullivan – High School Student Council Advisor**

71
72 Chairwoman Cathi Cook told the Board they will now approve the consent agenda items.
73 Cathi asked the Board if there were any questions or comments on the consent agenda items.
74 Cathi asked the Board if there were any consent items they would like to remove from the list.
75 There were none. Cathi told the Board the consent of any trustee pertains only to the items they
76 have the authority to decide on and if there is no objection, the agenda items will be adopted by
77 unanimous consent. There were no objections, and the consent agenda items were approved by
78 unanimous consent.

79 Trustee Ben Meyer wanted to recognize Steve Lewis for the wonderful job he has done
80 as the Middle School Activities Director this school year.

81
82 **7. Business: Action Items**

83 **A. Stevensville Teachers Association Request to Open Negotiations for Health**
84 **Insurance**

85 The collective bargaining agreement for the Stevensville Teachers Association (STA)
86 included language agreeing to discuss health benefits for 2024-2025 because of the uncertainty
87 surrounding future health insurance premiums. The board packet included a letter from the STA
88 requesting to open negotiations with the Board. At the Board Meeting on April 9, 2024, the
89 Trustees agreed to accept the MUST health insurance plan that contained increases ranging from
90 2.9% to 5.9% depending upon the plan selected by the employee. By agreeing to open
91 negotiations, the interest-based bargaining team will schedule time to discuss changes to the
92 health benefits provided to all employees.

93 Stephanie Esch motioned to open negotiations with the Stevensville Teachers Association
94 to discuss health benefits for 2024-2025. Jennifer Gunterman seconded the motion. All trustees
95 voted aye. The motion passed.

96 **B. Out-of-State travel for National History Day**

97

98 Superintendent Thennis indicated that one of our students qualified to attend the National
99 History Day competition at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. The competition is
100 scheduled for June 9th – June 13th. Mr. Wells and Mr. Buerkle have commitments that prevent
101 them from attending, however, Ms. Heidi Cowan has agreed to attend as a chaperone. The
102 University of Maryland will house students and chaperones for the event. The student is
103 fundraising to attend the event, but to help the District will pay for registration and fees for
104 housing and meals on the Campus. Cody was asked to report to the Board on his
105 travels/experience.

106
107 Jennifer Gunterman moved for the approval of the out-of-state travel for Cody Bradford
108 to attend the National History Day competition at the University of Maryland. Billy Donaldson
109 seconded the motion. All trustees voted aye. The motion passed.

110

111 **C. Superintendent Contract**

112

113 The proposed superintendent's contract includes changes in terms including a three-year
114 agreement to include 250 working days per year. The compensation is \$124,800 annually which
115 is an increase of 4% from the original contract signed in 2022. All other aspects of the contract
116 remain the same.

117 Trustee Dan Mullan commented that Superintendent Thennis has done a wonderful job!
118 He has issues with the \$800/month housing allowance, the \$1500/year for life and disability
119 insurance premium but is okay with the 4% increase.

120 Board Chair Cathi Cook indicated that Superintendent Thennis started with a 2-year
121 contract. In the past superintendents have been given 3-year contracts. Housing and life and
122 disability are standard in superintendent contracts. Trustee Jennifer Gunterman indicated that
123 housing has been in previous contracts and that she is in favor of a 3-year contract. Trustee Kris
124 McKoy indicated that for Stevensville School District to be competitive with other districts these
125 items need to be offered. Trustee Billy Donaldson supports a 3-year contract. Trustee Stephanie
126 Esch echoes that she wants stability for the district by offering a 3-year contract.

127 Kris McKoy moved for the approval of the Superintendent's contract as presented.
128 Stephanie Esch seconded the motion. Cathi Cook, Billy Donaldson, Kris McKoy, Jennifer
129 Gunterman, Stephanie Esch, Ben Meyer, and Tony Hudson voted aye. Dan Mullan voted no. The
130 motion passed.

131 **D. Elementary Administration Contracts**

132 The three administrative contracts were presented for the Boards consideration.

133
134 Sierra Bauer was approved for the Elementary Principal responsible for grades EK-5.
135 Stephanie Esch moved for the approval of Sierra Bauer’s Elementary Principal contract as
136 presented. Kris McCoy seconded the motion. Cathi Cook, Ben Meyer, Dan Mullan, Billy
137 Donaldson, Stephanie Esch, Tony Hudson, and Kris McKoy voted aye. Jennifer Gunterman
138 abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

139 Angie Armour was approved as the Middle School Principal for grades 6-8. Angie will also
140 be assigned the responsibility to oversee the District’s Infinite Campus needs, which will be a
141 separate stipend for \$5000 annually. Kris McKoy moved for the approval of the Middle School
142 Principal contract for Angie Armour presented. Billy Donaldson seconded the motion. Cathi Cook,
143 Ben Meyer, Dan Mullan, Billy Donaldson, Stephanie Esch, Tony Hudson, and Kris McKoy voted
144 aye. Jennifer Gunterman abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

145 Jon Konen was approved as the Elementary Assistant Principal assisting primarily in grades
146 EK-5 but will also provide support to the middle school staff and students. Jon will also be
147 assigned as the district’s curriculum coordinator for EK-12. The curriculum coordinator contract
148 would be a separate stipend of \$7000 annually. Kris McKoy moved for the approval of the
149 Elementary Assistant Principal contract for Jon Konen as presented. Stephanie Esch seconded
150 the motion. Cathi Cook, Ben Meyer, Dan Mullan, Billy Donaldson, Stephanie Esch, Tony Hudson,
151 and Kris McKoy voted aye. Jennifer Gunterman abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

152 **E. High School Principal Contract**

153
154 Zeke Kaney was approved as the High School Principal at a previous board meeting. His
155 contract was presented in the board packet for approval. Jennifer Gunterman moved for the
156 approval of the High School Principal contract as presented. Ben Meyer seconded the motion.
157 All trustees voted aye. The motion passed.

158 Board Comment

159
160 Trustee Stephanie Esch asked why there was no contract for Dani Smith the Athletic
161 Director/Vice-Principal. Superintendent Thennis indicated that he wants to try to solve the combo
162 position. Last year he had tried to hire a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) but was unable
163 to find anyone. Mr. Thennis is open to conversations regarding how to move forward.

164

165 Public Comment

166 Matt Bierer, a local citizen, commented that he seems to remember a discussion last year
167 about combining the positions. Matt thinks the district is being redundant since we've had an
168 Athletic Director/Vice Principal position in the past and gone away from that type of job
169 description.

170 **F. Policy 2nd Reading (1420, 3141, 7008, 2165)**

171
172 Policy 1420

173 This updated policy guides compliance with HB 890. This law requires class one or two
174 districts to make audio and video recordings of meetings in which the board has supervision,
175 control, jurisdiction, or advisory power. Stevensville is a class one district. Policy #1420 does
176 not require audio and video recordings of committee meetings or work sessions. Generally, any
177 meeting where the Board takes action, needs to be recorded and posted for the public. At the
178 direction of the Board of Trustees, language was added to Policy #1420 consistent with current
179 policy for additional agenda items.

180 Policy 3141

181 This updated policy guides the district to comply with HB 203, which changes out-of-
182 district enrollment. Superintendent Thennis indicated that other districts in the Bitterroot Valley
183 were not going to place time constraints on out-of-district enrollments. Superintendent Thennis
184 proposed adding language to provide the Superintendent or designee the ability to open
185 enrollment for nonresident (out-of-district) students after the June 1st or November 1st deadline.
186 This allows us to accept nonresident (out-of-district) students into our Alternative Learning Center
187 or during other extenuating circumstances.

188 There was discussion amongst trustees about the best way to handle deadline dates if
189 written into policy 3141. Most Trustees feel that it needs to be brought back to the policy
190 committee for review and be rewritten.

191 Public Comment

192 Erin Schafer, teacher, is concerned that recently we had two students unenroll and enroll
193 in Hamilton. She wants to ensure that our school can accommodate students that want to come
194 to our school.

195 Policy 7008

196 This policy aligns with policy 3141 and the financial exchange between the school districts.
197 No changes have been made to this policy since the prior board meeting.

198 Policy 2165

199 This policy is established to comply with HB 352. This policy establishes enrollment
200 standards for four-year-old students in an early kindergarten (literacy) program. This policy
201 guides a classroom-based program and allows parents to choose either a full or half-day
202 enrollment. It also establishes expectations including a jumpstart program for students in EK- 3rd
203 grade for summer learning. The Stevensville Public Schools established an early kindergarten
204 program last year and will explore adding a jumpstart program in the future. The program intends
205 to improve the proficiency rates of students by 3rd grade.

206 One clarification in this policy is that the classroom-based program is a full-day program,
207 but parents can consider enrollment half time as well. This is updated in the policy presented.

208 Stephanie Esch motioned to approve Policies 1420, 7008, and 2165 for adoption to the
209 Stevensville Board of Trustees Policies. Jennifer Gunterman seconded motion. All trustees voted
210 aye. The motion passed.

211 Stephanie Esch motioned to refer Policy 3141 back to the policy committee for review.
212 Kris McKoy seconded the motion. All trustees voted aye. The motion passed.

213 There was a five (5) minute break.

214 **G. Self-Evaluation of the Stevensville Board of Trustees**

215
216 The Board of trustees evaluated themselves in each of the six (6) dimensions of the board
217 evaluation. The Board Chair read out each question and the answers provided by each trustee
218 and the information was discussed amongst the trustees.

219
220 **8. Adjourn**

221
222 Tony Hudson motioned to adjourn the board meeting. Kris McKoy seconded the motion.
223 All trustees voted aye. The motion passed.

224 Board Chairman: Signed Copy on File in District Office.

225 Date: May 14, 2024.

226 School Board Clerk: Signed Copy on File in District Office.