

MINUTES

Basin Elementary School District No. 5
Regular Meeting

February 10, 2025
Basin Elementary School

Board members present:

Shannon Phillips – *Board Chair* Terry Heaton – *Trustee* Scott Brock – *Trustee*

Administrators present:

Sarah Eyer, County Superintendent –
Britton Mann, District Clerk

Staff: Mrs. Thomas

Visitors: Faith McCulloch, Rachael Wilkinson, Shelby Osborne, Skylar Wilkinson

CALL ELEMENTARY BOARD TO ORDER The Elementary Board was called to order at 4:40 p.m. by Shannon, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW None

PUBLIC COMMENT /
INTRODUCTION OF
VISITORS

Shannon read Public Comment. Shannon asked if any of the visitors had a comment to make. Faith McCulloch stated that she had something to say. She stated that she was concerned about her job. Herself and the other para had walked out of school and left the job on January 31, 2025 stating they felt they were in an unsafe environment. She stated that she read Montana Code and it says that a para should not be left alone with a SPED student. She stated that she felt unsafe so she left the school and has tried to talk with admin and is getting no response. She was involved in a ZOOM meeting the next day, Friday January 31, 2025 with County Superintendent Sarah Eyer, Supervising Teacher Katie Thomas and the other para Rachael Wilkinson. She went on to state that she received a text message that following day confirming that she severed her employment. She stated that she did not quit and was confused and was never told why she no longer had a job. She stated that she felt this was all retaliation. She went on to state that she requested an emergency board meeting, has sent emails and also asked about her child's education and has been ignored. She stated that she should have never been put in an unsafe position with a child. Ms. McCulloch also stated that she was never told what she was hired for and the job description that she was given did not match what she was told she would be doing during her interview. She then started to discuss other students at the school who are currently on an IEP and concerned about them getting a proper education. Mr. Wilkinson stated that his son doesn't get any attention and all of the attention is on the other special needs student. Shannon stated that she appreciates the comments, however the meeting does need to move along and also allow comments from anyone else in the audience. Faith continued to discuss feeling retaliated against and has lost her job. She is the primary source of income for her family and cannot even apply for unemployment benefits. This has been a week and she still has not received any answers to her questions. Shannon once again thanked her for her comments but stated that the meeting needed to continue to discuss agenda topics.

APPROVAL OF
CLAIMS AND
PAYROLL
APPROVAL OF
PREVIOUS MINUTES

Terry motioned to approve the claims, payroll and timesheets for February 2025. Scott seconded, all present approved.

Terry and Shannon both noticed errors in the minutes. Terry noted a spelling error and Shannon stated that Daleen Tacey was spelled with 2 "e's". Terry motioned to approve minutes with the noted changes. Scott seconded, all approved.

CUSTODIAN REPORT

Will was in attendance. Shannon asked how things were going and Will stated you tell me. The board stated that they all were very happy with the building. Sarah asked about the snow removal. Both Scott and Terry stated that they have been helping to shovel the walk way and the parking area. Terry suggested to Will that he only purchase enough Envirox to get through the end of the year. Will also said that he might need to purchase large trash bags. Will also said that Culligan still has not stopped to pick up the empty water bottles. Terry took Culligan's information and will give them a call.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mrs. Eyer discussed the following:

1. Timeline for what the direction the school is going in.
2. The Tuition bill that will go into effect this fall.
3. Starting a dialog on the possibility of going non-operational. Shannon would like to see tax increase numbers. Scott stated that he felt the school is something to fight for and feels like the community needs to be aware of this. He suggested advertising and putting an article in the paper. Elizabeth Kaleva law office in Missoula would be able to walk us through any non-operational procedures.
4. Cole Mosby out of Montana City owns an IT business similar to SchoolHouse IT and would like the opportunity to bid for services next year.

After Mrs. Eyer finished her report, Ms. McCulloch started commenting again about the issue of her job and receiving no information from Mrs. Eyer regarding why she no longer had a job. She also was quoting information from a packet that she said was about laws for paraprofessionals in Montana. Mrs. Eyer stated that she gave Ms. McCulloch resources to follow up with at OPI and advocacy groups for her concerns in an email. Ms. McCulloch stated that she did not think it was her job to reach out to these groups. Ms. McCulloch also brought up the student handbook and any grievance procedures, however she was never given one. Mrs. Eyer stated that a student handbook is not required by law to give out. While Mrs. Eyer continued to try and speak, Ms. McCulloch continued to speak over her stating she won't return my messages, she won't even look at me now, look at her. Mrs. Eyer packed her belongings and left the meeting. Ms. McCulloch continued to discuss her frustrations and anger towards the situation. She talked about her own children as students and the unsafe environment due to one other student. Shannon stated that there will be no talk of any student information. Shannon also asked Ms. McCulloch what she could do for her. Shannon stated that she wanted to help her and how could she do that. Shannon stated that she would gather some information for her and asked numerous times where and when she would leave the information. Ms. McCulloch never gave an answer to that, so Shannon asked if she could leave it at the school and it could be picked up the following Monday, Faith agreed. Ms. McCulloch continued to discuss her frustrations and began crying about the current situation with the school and lack of services that Prickly Pear were providing. She stated that when the therapists from Prickly Pear came, they didn't stay long and either made copies or only were with students for a short period of time and the paras were never given any direction on what to do. Scott asked to hear more about the interactions with the one on one student. Shannon stated that there will be no discussion of any student. Terry asked if she was upset with the school or Prickly Pear. Faith stated she was upset with both entities. Shannon stated that there were still items on the agenda that needed to be attended to and we must move forward. She appreciates the comments from Faith and she would leave information for her and it this point the meeting needed to move forward.

CLERKS REPORT

Britton is still on medical leave and not present.

1. Budget vs. Actual: No questions.

TEACHER REPORT

Ms. Thomas provided a report for the official minutes.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Nothing at this time.

IT REPORT

Nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Call for Election / Resolution for Jefferson County to run 24/25 Election – Scott motioned to call for the election on May 6, 2025 and to also have Jefferson County run said election. Terry seconded, all present approved.

Para-Professional Positions – Tabled for a possible future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Policy Maintenance – Standing Agenda Item: None

Facility Maintenance – Standing Agenda Item: None

Approval of Substitutes – Standing Agenda Item: None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm.

Sharon Phillips Britt Mann
Chair, Elementary Board Clerk, Elementary Board