

**RIVER BEND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #2**  
**1110 3<sup>RD</sup> STREET**  
**FULTON, IL 61252**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING**

River Bend Community Unit School District #2

November 20, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of River Bend Community Unit School District #2, Whiteside County, Illinois, was held on November 20, 2024, in the River Bend District Office Conference Room.

President Portz called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:30pm. Member Simmons was appointed Secretary Pro-Tem. Upon roll call by the Secretary Pro-Tem, the following board members were present: Jane Orman-Luker, Andrew Meyers, Dan Portz, and Mary Simmons, Absent: Eric Fish, Elizabeth Falls, and Jay Ritchie. Others present: Darryl Hogue, Superintendent and Jennifer Griser, Recording Secretary.

President Portz led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Portz welcomed all visitors including: Braeden Brennan, Chase Dykstra, Paige Emerson, Kyle Jackson, Jeremy Leitzen, Evan Piercy, Kathleen Schipper, Brooklyn Thoms, Mitch VanZuiden, Owen VanZuiden, Jacob Voss, Ryan Voss, and Zach Winkel; Principals: Patrick Henrekin, Jeffrey Hoese, and Jeff Parsons and Assistant Principals: Ray Borgman and Kelli Parsons.

(Member Fish entered 6:35pm)

Dr. Hogue added EPA Bus Grant to the Superintendent's Report.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the agenda as amended. Voice Vote, all yea, motion carried.*

There was no communication from the RBEA.

President Portz asked if anyone would like to speak as part of public forum. There was no one wishing to speak during public forum.

Mr. Borgman introduced the Golf Team who took 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the State Tournament. The team indicated they have four returning members and feel they will make an appearance at the state tournament again next school year.

(Member Falls entered at 6:44pm)

Mr. Parsons and Dr. Hogue introduced Brooklyn Thoms, the first Fulton High School student to take the CEO Course through Whiteside Area Career Center (WACC). Brooklyn shared a slide presentation with the board members highlighting the experiences she has had so far in the WACC CEO course.

Principal Reports. Dr. Hogue shared with the board members that Mr. Hoese was selected as the Illinois Principal Association, Northwest Region, Elementary School Principal of the year and is now in the running for the Illinois Elementary School Principal of the Year.

Mr. Hoeser shared that staff have completed CPI training. He also shared a Steamer Shout Out highlighting that Julie Miner has earned over \$16,000 in grants in her time with River Bend. Mr. Henrekin would like to add a stipend position for the middle school yearbook. Over the past few years staff members have worked on bettering their yearbook and would like to get students involved in the process. Mr. Henrekin also shared that he would like the district to consider not reapplying for the Physical Education Waiver. He feels students need more active time and this aligns with the district's study of *The Anxious Generation*. This would require more gym space as space and time is limited currently. Board members are in agreement that students need more active time and have been approached by parents regarding more gym space. Dr. Hogue will meet with PMA at the upcoming conference to discuss the district's bonding options.

Mr. Henrekin also shared the middle school would like to look at different time periods for the trip to Washington DC. The middle school feels attendance is low due to the cost and potentially interference with family trips in the summer. Multiple options for travel dates were suggested, during spring break, at the end of April or May, right after the school year. Member Fish suggested talking with Central Bank to help families set up savings accounts that start when their child enters kindergarten to help save for the trip. Member Meyers suggested looking at different trip options that are closer to bring the cost of the trip down.

Mr. Borgman shared that he is still seeking bids for a possible upgrade to the football field scoreboards. He also shared that the IHSA will be requiring the use of shot clocks in basketball starting with the 2026-2027 school year so those upgrades will be needed as well. Mr. Parsons shared the high school has three Illinois State Scholars this year, Miraya Pessman, Reese Germann, and Lucas Hartman.

Member Orman-Luker reported on the River Bend Educational Foundation meeting held on November 12, 2024. The Foundation has increased the amount of Martin Estate requests from \$400 to \$500. They also will be awarding up to three Zimmerman Scholarships in the spring.

Dr. Hogue reported on the November 20, 2024 Facilities Committee Meeting.

- Ten Year Health, Life, Safety survey - A full review of the projects was completed as well as identifying which amendment items can be completed by in-house staff and which items have to be completed by vendors and contractors.
- Construction Wrap up - The Veregy projects at FES and RBMS are completed and final payment is being set up.
- Maintenance Grant - Five different PA systems were reviewed and the committee recommended the bid from Washega for \$166,000. Washega offers the most complete process and provides for expansion to room amplification down the road. The maintenance grant will be applied for after board approval.
- Review of multi-sport practice space - Due to larger numbers than previous years and continued expansion of girls wrestling, the wrestling room no longer has the space needed for practices. A second space has been identified and is being used for overflow. District architect Scott Johnson provided three building options that could be considered. The first two buildings are wooden Morton type buildings costing 1.1 million and 1.3 million dollars. A brick structure was also recommended costing 1 million dollars as a base price. These options would also allow enough space for baseball and softball batting cages as well as practice space for cheerleading. After hearing about the three options the committee recommended moving forward with the brick addition costing 1 million dollars.

- Bus cleaning system - Taylor Whitney, transportation director, provided an update on a cleaning station he would like to add to the bus garage. He will be working with a contractor to create a space in the bus barn to shield and protect the rest of the building from water and create a wash bay. The cost of the project will be \$41,000.
- District office upgrade - The district office will be upgraded with new carpet costing \$8,500 and new office furniture and cabinets costing \$12,000 to \$15,000.

Dr. Hogue reported on the November 20, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting.

- Review of the treasurer's report - Revenue continues to flow into the district and categorical payments have been received for the first quarter. Expense ratios appear skewed because of the bond funds flowing in and out of accounts. Overall revenue and spending are on target.
- Review of pricing for a 1 million dollar athletic space expansion at the high school. The following information was shared about paying for the project:
  - 1% Capital Fund projects planning
    - Fund Balance Jun 30, 2024 - \$583,796 (funds used to pay early construction)
    - Current Balance (Oct 2024) - \$1,515,524
      - bond payment \$300,000 Nov 24
      - Veregy \$334,000
      - Working balance \$900,000 estimate
    - Annual income - \$700,000
    - Budget each year - \$300,000 Alternate Rev. bond payment
      - \$260,000 Budgeted district needs throughout the year
      - \$140,000 Estimated reserves
    - Other funding sources:
      - O/M Fund - June 30, 2024 balance \$489,000
      - Working Cash - October 31, 2024 balance \$1,086,424
    - Upcoming Building and Grounds needs:
      - PA System upgrade cost \$170,000 grant (\$50,000) \$120,000 district funds
      - HLS work \$570,000 (1-5 years to complete); \$165,000 estimate to address all high school doors
      - Multi-sport room space expansion 1.0 mil to 1.3 mil (payout March-Oct)
        - May have community support to offset costs
        - 1% funds \$500,000; Working Cash \$500,000; O/M \$200,000
        - Reduces invest income by 1.2 million
      - FHS Football Scoreboard \$30,000
      - FHS Sound system acoustics upgrade \$15,000 (partial correction) \$32,000 (full correction)
      - Bus cleaning station \$41,000 (building upgrades and equipment)
      - FHS Locker Rooms
  - The committee asked that a larger more comprehensive building plan be considered to address the need of a gym at the middle school. The board will be meeting with PMA bond advisors this weekend at Triple I and will report back to determine what type of funding and bonding capacity is available.
- Levy options were presented and the committee wants to see a 10% levy request be utilized for the upcoming levy cycle.

- Drivers Education Vehicle - The district is no longer able to borrow a car from Billion Auto. Several options were presented to lease a vehicle or purchase a vehicle. A three-year lease with 7,500 miles per year would cost \$19,500 for three years. The purchase price for a 2024 Ford Escape is \$27,200. The committee recommended purchasing the Ford Escape.

Board members discussed a date in January to hold the superintendent's review. They will meet at the district office.

Dr. Hogue shared that enrollment is holding steady.

Mrs. Schipper shared the Illinois School Report Card results with board members. Chronic absenteeism has improved in all buildings. All buildings received Commendable ratings. Mrs. Schipper and Angie Stone, the district's Math Instructional Coach, have been preparing presentations for teachers and giving them examples of problems the testing has shown students are struggling with.

Dr. Hogue shared that the second Strategic Planning meeting went well. The next meeting is scheduled for January. The committee would like to add some alumni.

Dr. Hogue shared that Heidi Williams, science teacher at the high school, would like to plan a trip abroad for high school students. The board members are in support of this and feel it is a great opportunity for students. Heidi has been in contact with two companies and will prepare a presentation for the board once she has an itinerary and pricing.

Dr. Hogue shared that the district will be applying for a grant through the EPA for electric busses.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Falls, to approve the consent agenda including the October 16, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, October Treasurers Report, and November Bills Recommended for Payment in the amount of \$1,288,897.95, subject to audit. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the tentative 2024 Tax Levy and set the Truth in Taxation Hearing for December 18, 2024. Dr. Hogue will move forward with preparing the 10% levy.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the tentative 2024 Tax Levy and set the Truth in Taxation Hearing for December 18, 2024. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2024 to pay debt service on the District's General Obligation School Bonds (Alternative Revenue Source), Series 2021.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers to approve the resolution abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2024 to pay debt service on the District's General Obligation School Bonds (Alternative Revenue Source), Series 2021. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the Health, Life, Safety Survey Amendments. The district was provided a list of items needed and approximate cost. Gary Wolfe feels many of these can be projects done at the district level which will bring costs down.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons to approve the Health, Life, Safety Survey Amendments as presented. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the maintenance grant application to be used towards a new PA system in all schools.

*It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the ISBE School Maintenance Project Grant Application and submit to ISBE for consideration Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended declaring four 3D printers at Fulton High School as surplus goods and dispose of in an appropriate manner. The printers are all out of date and some not working. The teachers have replaced them with better quality 3D printers.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to declare four 3D printers at Fulton High School as surplus goods and dispose of in an appropriate manner. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue informed the board that the high school received \$500 from the Illinois Foundation of FFA for their FFA students and \$910 from First Reformed Church for the student fund at the high school.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve gifts to the district as presented.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

*It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the following personnel items:*

- *Approve the resignation of Tyler Swanson as Bus Driver for River Bend effective October 24, 2024.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Alexis Lopez as Paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Mindy Mendoza as Lunch Cashier at Fulton High School for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve Jeremy Reynolds as Volunteer Boys Basketball coach for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve the following Volunteer Wrestling Coaches at the high school for the 2024-25 school year: Jesse Kennedy, Evan McCallister, and Zach Ryder.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire McKenzie Ehrich as Paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Rachel Hullinger as Night Cleaner at Fulton High School for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Joey Young as Paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School for the 2024-25 school year.*
- *Approve the following Volunteer Wrestling Coaches at the middle school for the 2024-25 school year: Jeremy Fosdick and Seth Spooner.*

*Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Meyers, to move into closed session for the purpose of discussing matters concerning the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors or volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body at 9:45pm. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to come out of closed session for the purpose of discussing matters concerning the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors or volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body at 10:45pm. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 6:30pm, at the River Bend District Office.

*It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Fish, to adjourn the meeting at 10:48pm. Voice vote, all yea, motion carried.*

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Dan Portz, President  
Board of Education  
River Bend CUSD #2  
Whiteside County

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Eric Fish, Secretary  
Board of Education  
River Bend CUSD #2  
Whiteside County