RIVER BEND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #2
1110 3RD STREET
FULTON, IL 61252
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

River Bend Community Unit School District #2 October 21, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of River Bend Community Unit District #2, Whiteside County, Illinois, was held on October 21, 2026, in the District Office Conference Room.

President Portz called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:30pm. Upon Roll Call by the Secretary, the following members were present: Elizabeth Falls, Kyle Folk, Andrew Meyers, Dan Portz, Mary Simmons, and Travis Temple. Absent: Jay Ritchie. Others present: Kelli Parsons, Superintendent, Jennifer Griser, Recording Secretary, and Paige Emerson, Student Liaison.

President Portz led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Portz welcomed all visitors including: Addison Christiansen, Eric Christiansen, Kristi Christiansen, Riley Davidson, Jeremy Leitzen, Jamie Snyder, Nicole Van Zuiden, and Owen Van Zuiden; Principals: Patrick Henrekin, Jeffrey Hoese, and Jeff Parsons; Assistant Principals: Nicole Bowers and Aimee Marten.

The Relationship and Culture Building question was skipped due to a lengthy meeting.

There were no additions to the agenda.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Folk, to approve the agenda as presented. Voice Vote, all yea, motion carried.

President Portz asked if there was any information the RBEA would like to share. Mrs. Snyder stated there was nothing to share at this time.

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

Mr. Parsons introduced Owen Van Zuiden, Fulton High School's first time 1A Individual State Golf Champion. On his journey to the state championship, Owen also won the Regional and Sectional tournaments. Owen plans to attend and play golf at Black Hawk College in the fall and major in business.

Mr. Hoese thanked the board members for allowing administration to attend professional development conferences and shared the need to network with other administrators. Mr. Hoese also congratulated Mr. Parsons and Mrs. Bowers on their presentation at the Illinois Principal's Association (IPA) conference. Mr. Parsons shared that he and Mrs. Bowers were asked to present again at next year's IPA Conference.

(Member Ritchie arrived at 7:18pm)

Paige shared that as part of her involvement in the Illinois Education and Career Network Student Advisory Council she shared a career detective activity with the freshman SWiM class. The students were to pick a career they are interested in then enter that into the website provided to learn about pay, required education, and other information about their chosen career. Students then shared how their findings compared with their knowledge, perceived or known, of that chosen career prior to the search. Paige also invited all to attend the Fall Play at the high school on November 13th and 14th at 7:00pm.

Member Simmons shared highlights from the September and October River Bend Education Foundation meetings. Constellation will again provide funds so the district can continue with the summer classes and day trips. The date of the Academic Excellence dinner may need to be changed due to a conflict with an FFA function as the foundation would still like them to provide the dinner. A speaker has not been chosen yet, the foundation would like either a graduate of Fulton High School or someone that is related to a student. The foundation has implemented a new tuition reimbursement program for teachers pursuing their Master's degrees or paraprofessionals seeking their teaching licensure. The foundation will also provide funds to teachers seeking to complete requirements to teach dual credit classes.

Mrs. Parsons shared highlights from the Facilities, Citizen's Advisory, and Finance committee meetings. The facilities committee reviewed completed summer projects and went over a timeline for the few remaining items. The citizen's advisory committee discussed the wellness policy that will be up for review in January as well as highlighting the new parent/teacher advisory committee at the high school. The finance committee discussed the audit as well as the upcoming levy process.

Mrs. Parsons shared that enrollment remains steady.

The current list of FOIA requests that have been received was shared.

Mrs. Parsons shared a Work-Based Learning Compliance packet that Mrs. Pepper put together for students in Community Involvement and Work Study Placements. Mrs. Pepper will attend the November meeting to answer any remaining questions before the packet is approved for use.

Mrs. Parsons shared an update to the Professional Development plan for the semester. The district will no longer be working with Mark Hanson as the focus of the professional development days has shifted. The district's main focus will be to align curriculum vertically between the grade levels.

Mrs. Parsons shared potential levy information with the board members. The district will look to move forward with a 10% levy.

Mrs. Parsons shared a printout of overdrawn lunch accounts, minus any identifying information such as student name, grade level, and building. She shared that she has reached out to area school districts to see what their procedures are to help recoup funds and some of them send the unpaid balances to collections. Mrs. Parsons also spoke with the district attorney who shared that the district could create a policy regarding overdue lunch balances and then attempt to recoup the funds through small claims court. Mrs. Parsons will reach out to the attorney to gather more information on this process.

Mrs. Parsons shared that the topic discussed at the IASB Northwest Division meeting was regarding school board members "staying in their lane" and not overstepping their boundaries as board members. She also inquired about the meetings being recorded for board members that are unable to attend and this is not something that has been done for these meetings.

Mrs. Parsons shared that an appraisal had been done on the former Unity daycare building at that the market value came back as $148,000.

Jenny Blocker with Benning Group, LLC joined the meeting virtually to give an overview of the audit. There were no major concerns raised throughout the audit process, the district will not have a single audit this year due to federal grant funds received being under the dollar threshold.

Mrs. Parsons shared she has received a few requests and inquires regarding adding staffing positions. There has been discussion regarding an assistant cheer coach, additional technology staff, and additional music staff. Mrs. Parsons will continue to gather and share information on these positions for the board members to think about, she also reminded the board members of the need for an additional physical education teacher once the gymnasium build is complete.

It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the consent agenda, including the September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes, September 14, 2026 Closed Session Minutes, September Treasurer's Report, and October Bills Recommended for Payment in the amount of $783,466.34, subject to audit. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of the student handbook changes for all schools per the Illinois Principal Association's Model Student Handbook.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Folk, to approve the handbook updates for all schools as presented. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of a high school student's request to graduate early. The student has maxed out their possible dual credit opportunities and will receive their Associates degree from Sauk after the Spring semester.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Temple, to approve the student request to graduate early. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the school district and the City of Fulton for SRO services. This will allow the SRO to work for the city on district early dismissal days as well as holidays to stay up to date on procedural changes.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Falls, to approve the MOU between the City of Fulton and River Bend CUSD #2 for SRO services. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of estimated board member expenses for the Joint Annual Conference. Member Portz is the only board member attending the conference this year, Mrs. Parsons and Ms. Griser will also be attending.

It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Ritchie, to approve the estimated board member expenses for the Joint Annual Conference. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, abstain

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of the policy updates changing the district contact from Dr. Hogue to herself.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the policy changes removing Dr. Hogue's name and replacing with Mrs. Parsons. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of changing the open hours of the District Office to 7:30am-3:30pm daily from 7:30am-4:00pm daily.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Temple, to approve changing the open hours of the District Office from 7:30am-4:00pm to 7:30am-3:30pm. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of the Workman's Compensation Insurance proposal from Illinois Public Risk Fund (IPRF). Board members asked if there was anything the district could do to potentially lower our costs for future years. Mrs. Parsons will reach out to the insurance broker.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Ritchie, to approve the Workman's Compensation Insurance proposal as presented by IPRF for an annual premium of $105,730.00. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approving the bullying board policy as the district's policy and submitting to ISBE.

It was moved by Member Folk, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the Board Bullying Policy as the District's Bullying Policy and submit to ISBE. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of the new STAR Fund student activity account at the high school. This account will be used to provide incentives to students looking to increase their ACT scores. Several fundraisers have been lined up to help support this fund.

It was moved by Member Ritchie, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the new STAR Fund student activity account at the high school. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons recommended approval of transferring funds in the amount of $6,500 from the Boys' Track and Girls' Track activity accounts to the Boys' Relay and Girls' Invite accounts. Both accounts had received a donation for a timing system, after research it was decided the high school would not be purchasing the timing system and would instead host additional home track meets. Board approval is needed to move funds between accounts.

It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Falls, to approve moving funds as presented. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

Mrs. Parsons informed the board $1,200 was received from the Albany Food Pantry for milk at snack break and overdrawn lunch accounts.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Temple, to accept gifts to the district as presented. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

It was moved by Member Temple, seconded by Member Folk, to approve the following personnel items:

- *Approve Gregg Wiersema as Volunteer Trap Team Coach for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve Shawn Anton as Volunteer Robotics Coach for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Nicole Van Zuiden as Middle School Pep Club Sponsor for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve Ally Reed as Volunteer Girl's Basketball Coach at Fulton High School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the following as Volunteer Wrestling Coaches at Fulton High School for the 2026-2027 school year: Wiley Blasdell, Ben Fosdick, Jeremy Fosdick, and Seth Spooner.*
- *Approve the resignation of Ryan Voss as Boy's JV Basketball Coach at Fulton High School, effective immediately.*
- *Approve the resignation of Mitch Van Zuiden as Boy's Fresh/Soph Basketball Coach at Fulton High School, effective immediately.*
- *Approve Mitch Van Zuiden as Volunteer Boy's Basketball Coach at Fulton High School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the resignation of Taylor Mabaga as 6th Grade Girl's Basketball Coach at Fulton Middle School, effective immediately.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Adam Hamstra as Boy's JV Basketball Coach at Fulton High School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Patrick R Lower as Boy's Fresh/Soph Basketball Coach at Fulton High School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Kraig Schipper as 8th Grade Girls' Basketball Coach at Fulton Middle School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Amanda Stillings as 6th Grade Girls' Basketball Coach at Fulton Middle School for the 2026-2027 school year.*
- *Approve the resignation of Abbey Binkley as Paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School, effective October 21, 2026.*

Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Simmons, to move into closed session for the purposes 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, student concerns, or real estate at 8:45pm. Roll Call Vote

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Folk, to come out of closed session for the purposes 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, student concerns, or real estate at 9:46pm. Roll Call Vote

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

It was moved by Member Folk, seconded by Member Temple, to approve the Resolution authorizing purchase of real estate property, former Unity Christian school, for an amount not to exceed $150,000. Roll Call Vote.

Member Falls, yea *Member Ritchie, yea*
Member Folk, yea *Member Simmons, yea*
Member Meyers, yea *Member Temple, yea*
Member Portz, yea

Motion carried.

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, at 6:30pm at the River Bend District Office.

It was moved by Member Simmons, seconded by Member Meyers, to adjourn the meeting at 9:47pm. Voice Vote, all yea, motion carried.

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

Mary Simmons, Secretary
Board of Education
River Bend CUSD #2
Whiteside County