

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

River Bend Community Unit School District #2

February 18, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of River Bend Community Unit School District #2, Whiteside County, Illinois, was held on February 18, 2025, in the River Bend District Office Conference Room.

President Portz called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:31pm. Upon roll call by the Secretary, the following board members were Present: Eric Fish, Jane Orman-Luker, Dan Portz, Jay Ritchie and Mary Simmons; Absent: Elizabeth Falls and Andrew Meyers; Others present: Darryl Hogue, Superintendent and Jennifer Griser, Recording Secretary.

(Member Falls entered at 6:52pm)

President Portz led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Portz welcomed all visitors including: Paige Emerson, Kyle Folk, and Bob Lewis; Principals: Patrick Henrekin, Jeffrey Hoese, and Jeff Parsons and Assistant Principal: Kelli Parsons.

President Portz led all present in a relationship and culture building activity where everyone took a turn sharing their favorite meal and memories surrounding it.

There were no additions to the agenda.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the agenda as presented. 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.

Principal Reports. Mr. Parsons highlighted that students have started using Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) strategies to affirm teachers. Mr. Henrekin shared that he is looking for ways to incentivize students to do well on standardized tests. Mr. Hoese shared that the Books are Fun campaign went well again and they are working on creating a new video when this year's books are delivered as the company has been using last year's video to share with other schools to promote Books are Fun. Mr. Hoese also shared that the elementary school was nominated as a National Showcase School by CKH.

Member Portz asked the principals if there were any CKH strategies that the board could learn and incorporate. Mr. Hoese shared that the relationship and culture building activity at the beginning of the meetings is very similar to CKH. Dr. Hogue shared some meeting tactics that the administration use in meetings that could be used at board meetings.

Board members also had questions regarding the principal's discipline reports. The board members wanted to know if these were just the occurrences for the month or entire school year. The principals confirmed that they were just the discipline occurrences for the current month. Board

members asked if discipline for the year could be shared in chart format so they could see if there were any trends in the number of occurrences.

Mr. Hoese and Mr. Henrekin also shared fall and winter testing data from Fast Bridge. The reports that come from Fast Bridge are more detailed than programs used in the past and will allow for teachers to drill down better into what areas they need to focus on for student growth.

Member Portz gave Paige some ideas for topics and questions to bring to the student body.

Member Orman-Luker reported on the February 11, 2025 River Bend Education Foundation Meeting. Member Orman-Luker invited all to the Academic Excellence dinner on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, tickets are available for \$13.00. The speaker is Fulton graduate Audrey Jones and the culinary arts class will be preparing the meal again.

Dr. Hogue reported on the February 18, 2025 Facilities Committee Meeting.

**1. Summer project planning:** The committee discussed the following projects, what funds might cover the costs, and when to complete the work.

- High School walk-in refrigerator replacement of compressors - \$7,000 work will begin immediately using 1% funds
- Middle School Fire Panel - two bids have been received, one for \$24,000 and one for \$32,000. The current fire panel alarm continues to go into trouble mode. The alarm is original to the building. The district will proceed with replacement using 1% funds
- Middle School gym windows - This is a HLS item that was indicated by the architect for replacement. The current bid is for \$33,000; will proceed in the summer.
- High School magnetic door releases - This is a HLS item that requires the district to update door releases when the fire alarm goes off. Cost to upgrade the doors is \$165,000. The district will break the work up into three summers and pay using HLS funds.
- Middle School stage curtains - This is a HLS item that requires replacing the current non-fire retardant curtains for \$3,300. The curtains will be replaced immediately
- Gas Tank at bus garage - The current gas tanks are leaking and we need to replace. A plan to use district funds to replace and move forward using O/M funds.
- Sound upgrade at High School gymnasium - When the sound baffles were removed at the High School, sound quality diminished. A bid for \$15,000 (partial upgrade) and a bid for \$32,000 (full upgrade) was provided by an acoustic company. Mr. Parsons will follow-up with the company to see if segments of the baffles can be put up to see if there is sound quality improvement. 1% funds would be used for the payment.
- Shot clock for High School basketball - IHSA will begin using shot clocks for basketball games in the 2026-2027 school year. Purchasing the equipment early would provide for early use. A full cost is not yet determined.
- Tech space at the Middle School - Mr. Henrekin would like to create a small office for the Middle School tech staff to work. He is looking into having Mr. Snyder's class complete the work.
- Bleacher purchase at the High School for Middle School students - Currently the district moves bleachers from the city lot to create a space for Middle School students to sit at football games. Mr. Henrekin will provide a price for the purchase of the bleachers.

**2. RBMS field house and performing arts facility:** The committee reviewed the goals, needs, and concerns from staff members as the district continues to gather input on adding the buildings to the Middle School campus.

Dr. Hogue reported on the February 18, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting.

**1. Treasures Report Review:** A review of the percentage of revenue and expenses received and spent showed that we are spending similar amounts to last year at the same point and time. Both revenue and expenses are slightly skewed because the bond sale of 3.8 million dollars in July. A review of the treasurer's report showed that the Ed Fund has \$700,000 dollars less than last year at this time. The Ed Fund difference is due to the \$350,000 spent to add a pre-school. Also slower revenue and higher salary costs are eroding reserves. The Transportation Fund has about \$40,000 remaining and will most likely need to have an EBF deposit or a transfer to support the transportation expenses. Overall the year to year comparison shows that the District has \$537,581 less than it did last year at this time.

**2. Bonding options and timing for the sale of bonds:** field house and performing arts center at the middle school. Bob Lewis from PMA provided a review of the bonding options and timeline needed to sell the bonds. Bob reported the current bonding that is taking place through 2031. There is a way to layer additional bonds on top of the current bonds to pay for the RBMS project. A level payment and a wrap payment bond option was presented. Bob supplied bonding information for 18 million, 22 million and 24 million dollar projects that could be financed for 15, 20 or 25 year periods. Each bond repayment type and length of payment have pros and cons. Level payments are higher but provide a way to bond for additional dollars should it be needed. The wrap payment plan is lower cost to the taxpayer, but requires a longer period of payback time.

Bob also provided a timeline in which decisions have to be made.

By summer 2025 - Determine the scope of the project

Oct 2025 - Finalize amount of the bonds

Nov 2025 - Determine referendum ballot language

Dec 2025 - Adopt a resolution to place the referendum question on the March Ballot

Jan 2026 - March 2026 - Referendum committee runs campaign to promote and provide information about the project

March 17, 2026 - Election Day

Dr. Hogue would like to hold an open house in April or May and invite the community to learn about the project and then form a committee to help facilitate getting the information out and help with the referendum when the time comes.

Dr. Hogue reminded board members of the IASB Northwest Division Meeting taking place on Monday, March 31, 2025. There is an in person and virtual option, reservations are due March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Hogue shared that enrollment is holding steady.

Dr. Hogue shared with the board members that he, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Henrekin, and Mr. Anton met to discuss the possibility of expanding the music department and adding an additional staff member at the middle school. This expansion would not take place in the 2025-2026 school year as schedules and possible elective courses still need to be identified, as well as student interest.

Dr. Hogue shared with the board members the letter that was sent out to families at the beginning of January regarding weather related closings. Dr. Hogue also shared the reasoning for choosing a remote learning day for the most recent weather day was due to having two school days to prepare teachers and students for use of a remote learning day. Board members shared they thought it had been decided that the district would use all possible make up holiday days prior to using remote learning days. Board members would like to see a policy update that lays out how and when the district will use holiday make up days versus remote learning days. Member Portz asked Paige to add this to her items to take back to the student body and get their input on the use of remote learning days.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the consent agenda including the January 22, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes, January 28, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes, January Treasurers Report, and February Bills Recommended for Payment in the amount of \$188,148.81, subject to audit. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the Chromebook lease with American Capital for new Chromebooks at the middle school. They are next in the rotation for new Chromebooks.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the lease for new Chromebooks with American Capital. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the grant resolution in support of VR Headsets. River Bend would be joining a consortium of school districts to support receiving this grant and the district would only need to provide \$500 towards the VR Headsets.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the grant resolution in support of VR Headsets along with River Ridge CUSD. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Motion carried.*

There were no gifts to the district.

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

- *Approve the resignation, with the intent to retirement, of Deanna Leonhardt, Science and History Teacher, at River Bend Middle School, effective the end of the 2027-2028 school year, under the terms of Article VII, section 7.2 of the collective bargaining agreement.*

- *Approve the resignation, with the intent to retirement, of Chris Ketelsen, Physical Education Teacher, at River Bend Middle School, effective the end of the 2027-2028 school year, under the terms of Article VII, section 7.2 of the collective bargaining agreement.*
- *Approve the resignation, with the intent to retirement, of Christina VanZuiden, Math Teacher, at River Bend Middle School, effective the end of the 2027-2028 school year, under the terms of Article VII, section 7.2 of the collective bargaining agreement.*
- *Approve the following Softball Volunteer Coaches at Fulton High School for the 2024-2025 school year: Buddy Bueno, Jim Collachia, Ally Reed, Ryan Bennett, and Kelsey Gammons*
- *Approve the resignation of Travis Hartman as Special Education Teacher at Fulton Elementary School effective the end of the 2024-2025 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire the following Coaches/Sponsors for the 2025-2026 School Year:*

**Level I***Varsity Football - Patrick Lower**Varsity Volleyball – Stacy Germann***Level IA***Golf – Mitch VanZuiden***Level II***Sophomore Football – Dan Wilkins**Freshman Football – Zach Ryder**Sophomore Volleyball – Camerin Huizenga**Freshman Volleyball – Jeanna StremLOW***Level III***7<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball – Kendra Terry**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Volleyball – Colleen Temple**Roll Call Vote.**Member Falls, yea**Member Fish, yea**Member Orman-Luker, yea**Member Portz, yea**Member Ritchie, yea**Member Simmons, yea**Motion carried.**There was no closed session.*

*The next Regular Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 6:30pm, at the River Bend District Office.*

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Simmons, to adjourn the meeting at 9:46pm. 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