

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

River Bend Community Unit School District #2

October 18, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of River Bend CUSD #2, Whiteside County, Illinois was held on October 18, 2023, at the River Bend District Office.

President Portz called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:30pm. Upon Roll Call by the Secretary, the following board members were present: Elizabeth Falls, Eric Fish, Andrew Meyers, Jane Orman-Luker, Dan Portz, Jay Ritchie, and Mary Simmons, Absent: None. 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: Marty Brubaker, Owen Brubaker, Kyle DeMus, Matt Floming, Easton Griffith, Nathan Griffith, Nicole Griffith, Dustin Hook, Jeremy Leitzen, Kelli Parsons, Amanda Robertson, Tyler Vandendoren, Zac Vandendoren, Principals: Jeffrey Hoeser and Jeffrey Parsons, and Media: Jerry Lindsey, cityone.com.

(6:57 pm Kathleen Schipper entered)

(7:18 pm Patrick Henrekin entered)

Additions to the agenda. Dr. Hogue added to the superintendent's report an update on board emails.

*It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Simmons, 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.

Principal Reports. Mr. Parsons introduced the two Overall Steamers of the Quarter from Fulton High School, Owen Brubaker and Nicole Griffith. Both students are very involved with activities both in and out of school and are wonderful representatives of Steamer Nation. Mr. Parsons informed the board that No Pass, No Play is going well. At this time last year, there were 17 F's amongst students in extra-curriculars, today there are only two. The High School FFA group is getting out and about in the community, they presented at the Kiwanis meeting and are selling "Start Seeing Farmer" yard signs. The FFA group also has plans to bring different agricultural events to the elementary and middle schools. Mr. Parsons also informed the board the high school is looking to expand, and improve upon, the current community involvement and work study classes. He will have more information to share with the board at the November meeting. Mr. Parsons attended the NUIC meeting where it was decided that Morrison would be joining the conference in the 2024-2025 school year. The high school golf team placed 9<sup>th</sup> at the State Tournament with a young team and are excited about what the future holds for them.

Mr. Hoeser stated that the implementation of Capturing Kids Hearts is going very well at the elementary school. The staff continues to have professional development trainings on the district early out days.

Mr. Henrekin shared the middle school athletic conference is looking to add 6<sup>th</sup> grade sports, starting with boys' and girls' basketball. Currently, the hurdle is finding schools that are wanting to participate. Mr. Henrekin also stated finding practice time would be difficult.

Member Orman-Luker reported on the River Bend Educational Foundation meeting held on October 10, 2023. The Foundation approved mini grant requests for teachers in the amount of \$10,946 and Martin Estate requests in the amount of \$9,979. They have confirmed Aarik Woods as the speaker for the Academic Excellence dinner.

Dr. Hogue reported on the Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting held on October 18, 2023.

- Dr. Hogue shared with the group a letter the district sent to families about the value of attendance. The group liked the letter but would like more information about the types of absences the district is experiencing. Letters have been sent home to families with students who have missed 4-8 days so far this school year. The district is hoping to send letters home to all students at the end of each quarter with an update on their attendance. The letter would be coded in some manner (green/yellow/red) to indicate attendance in hopes to prompt more information and awareness. The challenge to the district lies with wanting students who are not feeling well to stay home, but also not missing many school days. Some feel this makes the district's message regarding attendance conflicting. The group would like to see more information regarding the effect attendance has on grades across the district.
- Dr. Hogue shared the expansion plans for FES with the group. Four rooms will be added to the building which will provide two additional classrooms, a conference room and a STEAM room. This will also allow for flexibility in room use if enrollment continues to increase.
- Dr. Hogue shared with the group a committee from Thomson has reached out regarding annexing from West Carroll and joining the River Bend district. River Bend is open to exploring the possibility and will enter into a feasibility study with West Carroll to determine the impact of such a move. A parent expressed their concern that they would not want their child's education impacted with overcrowded classes.
- Dr. Hogue shared with the group that a reunification drill with staff has been planned for November. All staff will evacuate from their buildings to one of the pre-determined evacuation sites and will then be bussed to the reunification site. Dr. Hogue sought parent input on a possible reunification drill with students in the future. Parents felt if the district could complete the drill with students and help them understand the drill is for practice that it could be valuable.
- The group also discussed the meeting time and low attendance at the committee meetings. It was decided to move the next meeting's start time to 4:00 pm and additional parents will be invited via a general invitation.

The next Citizen Advisory Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at the River Bend District Office.

Dr. Hogue reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on October 18, 2023.

- The treasurer's report was reviewed. October is a high cash on hand month due to the collection of tax dollars.

- Kyle DeMus with Benning Group reviewed the district's FY 23 financial audit. Overall the audit was very clean and Kyle thanked Rachel for her diligence which allowed for a smooth audit process. The district treasurer's bond was inadequate four months out of the year. Kyle indicated that the statute regarding the amount of a bond needed has changed and he does not see a need for the district to increase their treasurer's bond at this time. The district received an AFR score of 3.9 out of 4.0, earning recognition designation. This score is determined based on five areas of the district's financial information. The district has managed their debt well and continues to use funds to improve facilities and student offerings.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 5:30pm at the River Bend District Office.

Dr. Hogue informed the board Member Simmons has been recognized by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) as an Established Board Leader. Member Simmons has attended multiple Joint Annual Conferences, Division Meetings, and an IASB Virtual Summit, which provided points for her to earn this designation.

Dr. Hogue shared with the Board what our enrollment figures could look like if Thomson were to join with River Bend. These numbers were based off of figures Dr. Hogue had received in the spring. Most grade levels would require an additional section be added.

Kyle DeMus with Benning Group, LLC presented an overview of the audit to board members. Overall the audit went well, a few adjustments needed to be made in journal entries due to new Illinois statutes. Kyle shared a few pages from the audit report with the board that showed fund balances and that overall balances are up compared to prior years. He also shared with the board a document that shows fund balances when early tax money is received and noted that the district is doing well with not spending those funds prior to their budgeted intention. The district's AFR score was a 3.9 out of 4.0.

Dr. Hogue shared with the board a levy preview. He intends to present three levy options to the board. The EAV grew 7.0% from last year.

Dr. Hogue shared with the board that ISBE has determined the district has met the requirements of IDEA. Last year the district was designated as needs improvement and met with ISBE throughout the year to make sure our special education program was on track.

Dr. Hogue informed the board he will be meeting with Veregy for a construction update on Friday of this week. Dr. Hogue shared a presentation with the board that showed a few minor changes to the plans that had been talked about previously – addition of windows and employee restroom. There will be a door added between the two current kindergarten classrooms to better separate them into two rooms. The new parking lot design will add 76 spaces. The middle school conference room will need some cabinets and lighting moved.

Mrs. Schipper shared with the board the high school is looking for approval for an alternate high school diploma. This would be slightly lower standards than our current Fulton High School diploma. The high school was approached by the Center for Change in regards to a River Bend student that attends their school that this alternative diploma would benefit. The high school would also like to offer this alternative diploma to students who were not able to complete all requirements in four years, or who are of an age where completing the current requirements would be difficult. Mrs. Schipper explained

that the main difference in the two is the number of electives required, the core curriculum requirements would still be the same.

Dr. Hogue introduced Dustin Hook and Tyler and Zac Vandendoren, parents from the West Carroll school district who live in Thomson and are on the Thomson Annexation Committee. This group of parents is looking to bring their students to River Bend as they feel their students will receive a better education at River Bend and Fulton is closer for them than the schools in West Carroll. Currently their students are getting on buses very early in the morning, being transported to a central location, then getting on another bus to continue on to their designated building, they are also on the buses very late in the evenings.

The committee started looking into the annexation process in the spring of 2023. They contacted both their Regional Office of Education and River Bend's to see what needed to be done. The committee determined where the boundary lines would be, attained the number of voter signatures needed on their petition, and are ready to take the next step to petition for annexation. River Bend and West Carroll school districts have each agreed to have a feasibility study completed and the State of Illinois has agreed to pay for the study. The committee is seeking a letter of support from River Bend to attach to their petition. The committee stated that River Bend's ROE informed them they would also submit a letter of support following River Bend's letter. Dr. Hogue read a letter of support for the Thomson annexation and indicated the district attorney would review the letter before it was sent to the annexation committee.

The board members discussed at what point does the district let our families know that Thomson students joining River Bend could be a possibility. The board would like to see the feasibility study completed, to know whether or not this annexation and merger would benefit either district, and to have the answers to more questions. Dr. Hogue will send out a general letter informing parents what is happening.

Dr. Hogue shared with the board that he learned when people go to our district website to email the board members there are two options, they can email the board and himself in one group, or to just one board member and him. Dr. Hogue shared he was contacted by a community member that felt they should be able to just email the board member without the email going to him as well. Dr. Hogue asked for input on if the board wanted to continue with this process or if they would prefer if the emails would go to the board member only. The board felt comfortable with continuing with the current process. The board also indicated they would like there to be a statement letting people know that the email will go to the board member and Dr. Hogue.

*It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Portz, to approve the consent agenda including the September 20, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes; September's Treasurer's Report; and October bills recommended for payment in the amount of \$346,259.17, subject to audit. Roll Call Vote:*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the FY 23 Financial Audit Report.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the FY 23 Financial Audit as presented. Roll Call Vote.*

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the Preschool HighScope Curriculum at a cost of \$1,452.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Meyers, to approved the Preschool HighScope Curriculum. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of estimated expenses for board members attending the Triple I Conference in Chicago in November.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the estimated Board Member expenses for the Triple I Conference as presented. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the new bus lease with American Capital for five years. The district will save money with the new lease company and mileage restrictions and warranties are the same as the district’s previous lease.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the bus lease with American Capital for five years. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of Activity Fund Surety Bonds.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Orman-Luker, to approve the district Activity Surety Bonds for district secretaries for an annual premium of \$200.00. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the first reading of the Alternative High School diploma.

*Member Fish motioned to approve the first reading of the Alternative High School diploma. It was moved by Member Portz, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the first reading of the Alternative High School Diploma. Roll Call Vote.*

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended seeking bids for an Audit Request for Proposal. The district will seek bids now through November and Dr. Hogue hopes to have a recommendation for the December board meeting.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish to direct the superintendent to seek bids for an Audit Request for Proposal. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the first reading of the update to policy 5:220. This will allow the district to increase daily sub pay. The board felt comfortable with raising the rate to \$120 per day and \$125 per day after five consecutive days.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the first reading of the update on policy 5:220. Roll Call Vote.*

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| <i>Member Falls, yea</i>       | <i>Member Portz, yea</i>   |
| <i>Member Fish, yea</i>        | <i>Member Ritchie, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Meyers, yea</i>      | <i>Member Simmons, yea</i> |
| <i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i> |                            |

*Motion Carried.*

*Member Fish motioned to direct the district to implement the increase in sub pay effective immediately. It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Orman-Luker to direct the district to implement the increase in sub pay effective immediately. Roll Call Vote.*

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Meyers, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the second reading of select policy updates and adopt as policy.

*It was moved by Member Meyers, seconded by Member Fish, to approve the second reading, and adopt as policy, the updates to policies: 2:80, 2:170, 4:45, 4:100, 5:230, 6:10, 6:190, 6:240, 7:275, 7:305, 7:330. Roll Call Vote.*

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Meyers, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of Health Life Safety (HLS) Amendments to be used for the MGT window film installation in the district. The district will also apply for a maintenance grant with the state to cover remaining costs.

*It was moved by member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve HLS Amendments #5 for Early Step Preschool, #18 for Fulton Elementary School, #24 for River Bend Middle School, and #28 for Fulton High School to install MGT window film safety shields for \$60,000. Roll Call Vote.*

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Meyers, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended sending a letter of interest, pending the feasibility study, to the Thomson annexation group to submit with their petition to ROE #8.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Meyers, to direct the superintendent to send a letter of interest, pending the feasibility study, to the Thomson annexation group to submit with their petition to ROE #8. Roll Call Vote.*

<i>Member Falls, yea</i>	<i>Member Portz, yea</i>
<i>Member Fish, yea</i>	<i>Member Ritchie, yea</i>
<i>Member Meyers, yea</i>	<i>Member Simmons, yea</i>
<i>Member Orman-Luker, yea</i>	

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of the license use agreement between River Bend and a new local business, Steamer Stop, LLC. The business would like to use the lil' steamer steamboat design as

their store sign. Board members had questions regarding the copyright status of the image. There was also some concern that the store would be selling alcohol and tobacco. Approval was tabled until the copyright questions could be answered.

Dr. Hogue recommended approval of sewing supplies at Fulton High School be determined as surplus goods and to dispose of in an appropriate manner

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Meyers, to approve the 19 sewing machines, 1 electric skillet, 3 small totes of thread, 3 irons, 2 ironing boards, 12 cutting mats, and 4 boxes of miscellaneous sewing equipment as surplus goods and dispose of in an appropriate manner. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

Dr. Hogue informed the board the district received \$561 from Fulton Kiwanis to Key Club, \$950 from the Martha Cruz Memorial for Bass Fishing, \$500 from Central Bank for Robotics, \$500 from Connie Decker for BLIND, \$500 from Local Community Grants Team and Facility #7024 for BLIND.

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to accept gifts to the district as presented. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*



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

- *Approve the resignation of Debora Courtade, one-on-one aide at River Bend Middle School, effective September 28, 2023.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Leneva Roseboom as paraprofessional at Fulton High School, effective October 12, 2023.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Kayleigh Bonneur as paraprofessional at Fulton Elementary School, effective October 23, 2023.*
- *Approve the resignation of Cheryl Juist as van driver for the district due to health reasons, effective October 5, 2023.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Thomas Eden as River Bend Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Basketball coach for the 2023-2024 school year.*
- *Approve the recommendation to hire Thomas Eden as Fulton High School Fresh/Soph Baseball Coach for the 2023-2024 school year.*
- *Approve the following volunteer baseball coach for the 2023-2024 school year: Justin Jensen.*

*Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Fish, 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 and a specific payment request for an employee at 9:49pm. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

*It was moved by Member Fish, 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 and a specific payment request for an employee at 9:59 pm. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, yea*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

*It was moved by Member Orman-Luker, seconded by Member Simmons, to approve the Closed Sessions Minutes date September 13, 2023 as presented. Roll Call Vote.*

*Member Falls, yea*

*Member Portz, yea*

*Member Fish, abstain*

*Member Ritchie, yea*

*Member Meyers, yea*

*Member Simmons, yea*

*Member Orman-Luker, yea*

*Motion Carried.*

The next Regular Board Meeting will be held Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 6:30pm, at the River Bend District Office.

*It was moved by Member Fish, seconded by Member Simmons, to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 pm. Voice vote, all yea, motion carried.*

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

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