

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

"Working together to provide high quality educational opportunities for all."

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Personnel & Finance Committee Agenda Minutes

~~December 2, 2025~~ ~~December 16, 2025~~ **January 6, 2026** | 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Holman House/District Office Conference Room

Members Present: Jeff Barnum, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Rich Ruhlin

Members Absent: Amanda Caruso

Other Members Present: Gwen Doak

Staff Present: Christian Elkington, Monique Poulin, Alison Gamache

Other Staff Present: Jody Harmon, Mike Hanson

1. Call Meeting to Order - Chair Robbins

- a. Meeting called to order at 5:59.

2. Previous Committee Minutes- [11-4-2025](#) - Chair Robbins

- a. Approved at 11.18.25 Board meeting
- b. Any questions?
 - i. None

3. Agenda item adjustment (agreed to without objection)

- a. [Camden Solar Project - Update to LD 1777](#) - Harmon
 - i. Jody Harmon reviewed the attached slideshow.
 - ii. Questions?
 1. There is a lawsuit that was filed last month and if that goes through, it will go back to the prior credit arrangements. This would be a benefit to RSU #9 if we could return to the original agreement..
 2. Have been meeting with other companies to research options.
 3. Jody has been running different models to see what our best opportunity for savings might be.
 4. We are losing up to \$40,000-\$50,000 of savings. Could be a cost increase of one third. There is definitely a cost to maintain solar given the administrative time investment, although Jody continues to learn with each phone call.
 5. Electricity budget lines may go up as part of the FY27 budget process.
 - iii. Next Steps

4. [25-26 Warrant Schedule](#) - Director of Finance Gamache

- a. Questions?

- b. If you know you will be absent, how do you get someone to take your place? What will be our plan going forward?
 - i. This is covered informally by the members.
 - ii. Keeping the schedule is vital to Business Office operations.

5. NEW Part 1.

- a. Special Ed Playground for AHS - Hanson/ Ibarguen
 - i. Proposal and quote
 - 1. [Quote, Pics](#)
 - 2. One company was easy to work with to make adjustments
 - 3. The other company's quote was 50% more than this one
 - ii. Questions
 - 1. Funding-special education or operations account funds that are not used or ask the board to tap into the special education reserve account.
 - 2. This plan can be modified as necessary going forward.
 - iii. Vote
 - 1. Gloria McGraw moved to accept the project as presented. Rich Ruhlin seconded the motion. It was a unanimous vote.
- b. Building Infrastructure Management Systems (BIMS) - Ibarguen
 - i. Possible opportunity
 - ii. [Energy Savings Audit Application Final 12.1.25](#)
 - 1. Application has been submitted with no update yet.
 - 2. Can we get a dashboard as part of this plan? TBD.
- c. Safety Committee - Ibarguen
 - i. Mapping bid [Wayfinder - R J Goan & Associates](#)
 - 1. Why do we need it?
 - a. For emergency services and evacuation routes with clear and uniform formatting
 - b. Will come in Digital format-we will get real time updates with these services.
 - c. Will include utility services.
 - 2. Next steps
- d. School Revolving Renovation Funds
 - i. Pending approval (January)
 - 1. If received, the board will have to vote for the no interest loan portion of the grant.
 - ii. Grant application frequency?
 - 1. At this time, it is yearly.
 - iii. Next steps?
- e. Girls Lacrosse at MBMS - Shane Dudash
 - i. [Proposal](#)
 - ii. Discussion
 - 1. Survey-40 expressed interest.
 - 2. The boys' team plays at Kemp Field currently and this team could travel with them.

3. \$21,000 in fundraising account currently.
4. Suggestion is to split the start up cost (\$13,000) between fundraising account and local funds.
5. Softball and track are other offerings at MBMS that same season.
6. 25-30 currently participating at the high school level.

iii. Vote

1. Rich Ruhlin made a motion to contribute \$6,500 from local funds; Josh seconded. Josh Robbins, Rich Ruhlin, Gloria McGraw and Gwen Doak voted in favor; Jeff Barnum was opposed.

6. Updates

- a. MSMA Risk and Safety Manager visit - Ibarguen
 - i. 11/13 & 11/14
 1. What was it?
 - a. Scott Holmes provided the district with a safety awareness dashboard with information on his visits to all locations.
 - b. Examples of minor safety items noted include extension cords that are not up to code and minor egress issues that were quickly addressed.
 2. Questions?
 - a. There was nothing egregious or punitive in regards to facilities concerns.
 3. Next steps?
 - a. Will review and make changes as directed and needed by report's findings.
- b. Director Gamache
 - i. [25-26 Monthly Budget Update](#)
 1. November
 - a. Questions?
 - i. None
 2. December
 - a. Questions?
 - i. Many items have been encumbered through the end of the year.
- ii. 2025 Audit
 1. Auditors were here 11/24 & 11/25
 2. Process explanation
 - a. Have had no questions since their visit.
 - b. Have put in an audit extension for four months with the MDOE. This will allow for state subsidy to continue even without the audit on file.
 - c. Questions
 - d. Next steps
 - i. We will wait for their questions or requests of information.
- iii. Search for a new Audit Firm?

1. Should we?
 - a. We are fortunate that they took us on!
 - b. The process is a lot slower than before COVID as there are less firms willing to take on clients.
 - i. They are working hard to hire more accountants.
 - c. We don't want to investigate different firms at the expense of losing our current firm.
2. Canada?
 - a. We could use them. Not sure if they have a bigger or better pool to choose from. A possible next step would be an RFP. Alison will check with MSMA.
3. Questions
4. Next steps

iv. MBMS Gym & Basement Repair

1. We hope this is the final review
2. [RD Payment Package](#)
 - a. We will be paying the deductible and a bit of depreciation costs.

v. 26-27 Budget

1. Timeline
 - a. Setting up a new date in February to take the place of the January meeting that we will not be ready for.
2. What would the Finance Committee like to be shared & discussed at the next two Board Meetings?
 - a. Trends for substitute teacher budget lines and staff attendance information.
 - b. Contractual cost increases
 - c. Specific area projections-health insurance, for example.
 - i. We are planning for a 10% insurance increase.

7. New - Elkington/Gamache

- a. School Nutrition Balance too High 24-25 - Elkington
 - i. We knew this was coming
 - ii. Completed work this summer
 - iii. [Plan](#)
 1. Questions
 2. Vote
 - a. Gloria McGraw made the motion to approve the plan and Rich Ruhlin seconded it; unanimous.

NEXT AGENDA - Time ran out

- b. Special Ed Fiscal Monitoring - Gamache
 - i. What did we learn?
 - 1. Any patterns?
 - 2. What did they say we did well?
 - 3. What items do we need to work on?
 - ii. Acceptance and Corrective Action Plan
- c. [Credit Limit Increase](#) - Gamache
- d. MBMS Bjorn CTE Over-Expenditure - Gamache
 - i. Transfer of funds
 - 1. The project finished over by \$416,822.96
 - 2. We have a balance in CD \$230,333.63 (Previous Bjorn donation)
 - a. With this funding the project will be overspent by \$186,489.33
 - i. We will need to transfer from fund 3090 to fund 1000
 - ii. Questions?
 - iii. Vote
- e. Public Information support & planning - Elkington's messaging
 - i. Recent concerns overwhelmed the district office
 - 1. These concerns demonstrated our lack of preparedness, with my office putting this on the backburner the last two years
 - a. RSU (Long-Term Goal 3: All RSU 9 community members will be well informed about education in their schools and utilize frequent opportunities for feedback to give their input.
 - i. 25-26 Action Steps
 - 1. Community: Assess family participation in school & create action plan
 - 2. Culture: Assess & develop student voice structures in grades 5-12
 - 2. I found a highly regarded firm to support us during our recent difficulties and to support us with planning
 - a. We needed and received greater expertise on the spot during November
 - i. Instead of charging us for their time and consultation I agreed to contract with them
 - ii. [12-9-2025 John Guilfoil PR Contract - Final](#)
 - b. Funding
 - i. Be paid in advance and not be part of the 26-27 budget
 - 3. Next steps:
 - a. Three parts:
 - i. Communications Audit
 - 1. \$9,000 (one-time cost)
 - ii. 12 month contract
 - 1. Approx \$18,000 (\$1,500 per month)

2. Develop a communication plan
 - a. Social Media
 - b. Transparency and speed
3. PD support with creating monthly content over the next year

iii. Continuation of contract would be a reduction of approx \$1,000 per month for year 2

1. TBD by Board

b. Questions

8. Next Meeting - February 3, 2026

9. Adjourned at -

10. Future Agenda Items:

- Digitize Warrant Signing
- # of students who moved in
- Superintendent Evaluation