

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