

Mt. Blue Regional School District



COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

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

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Chesterville | Farmington | Industry | New Sharon | New Vineyard | Starks | Temple | Vienna | Weld | Wilton

Board of Directors Workshop

RSU 9 BOARD WORKSHOP (for Board Members and Superintendent)

DATE: July 23, 2024

PLACE: The Chef's Table, Mt. Blue Campus

TIME: 5:45pm

1. Get-together, Introductions, Responsibilities, Board Dynamics, and sharing.

No Decisions or votes will be taken at the Board Workshop.

Board of Directors Board Meeting Agenda

DATE: July, 23 2024

PLACE: The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

TIME: 6:30pm

LIVESTREAM LINK: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/unvoa3ijkfnyp9oufole>

Members Present: *Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith*

Members Absent: *Will Jones*

Other Staff Present: *Christian Elkington, Katie Merrill, Alison Gamache*

- I. **Call to Order** - Superintendent Elkington
Meeting Called to order at 6:30pm by Superintendent
 - II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
 - III. **New Board Member Welcome** - Superintendent Elkington
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Welcome to Katie Martikke, Gerry Provencher, and Dina Spenciner (started with us in June), our new Board Members. Last week's Board Member Orientation for them went well.

IV. Reorganization of the Board – Superintendent Elkington

A. [Board Reorganization Process](#)

B. Election of Officers - Superintendent Elkington

1. Chair

CE asked for nominations from the floor. Gwen nominated Dorothy “Dee” Robinson for Chair of the RSU 9 School Board. No other nominations were made.

a) Vote

<p><i>Motion to approve Dee Robinson as Board Chair of the RSU 9 School Board.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</p> <p>Nays: Abstain: Vote: 917/0/0</p>	<p>Motion: Gwen Doak Seconded: N/A Motion: Passed</p>
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2. Vice Chair

Gwen Doak was nominated by Wayne Kinney. It was clarified why no seconds are needed on the motion.

<p><i>Motion to approve Gwen Doak as Vice Chair of the RSU 9 School Board.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</p> <p>Nays: Abstain: Vote: 917/0/0</p>	<p>Motion: Wayne Kinney Seconded: NA Motion: Passed</p>
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C. Committee Assignments - Elected Chair Robinson

1. [Review 23-24 Assignments](#)

2. [Committee Assignment Info](#)

3. Process and timeframe to make requests through the Chair were reviewed. Chair Robinson *will send out an email for Board members to choose their 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices of standing committees as well as interest in any special committees. Will need choices quickly.*

V. **Adjustments to the Agenda - None**

VI. **Report of the Chairperson - Re-Elected Chair Robinson**

A. **Welcome new Board Members**

1. **Katie Martikke - Starks**

2. **Gerald “Gerry” Provencher - New Sharon**

Chair Robinson thanked them along with Dina Spenciner of Farmington for stepping up and looks forward to serving with them.

B. [Code of Ethics](#)

Review of their importance

Preamble and A & B

- *Were read by Chair Robinson, noting it's good to refresh every year, and they are available online (district website).*

VII. **Communications**

A. **None**

VIII. **Good news stories from the Board or Administrators**

- *Jeff has been re-elected.*
- *Rich - Shout out to Michael Turner and district staff on how good the District Office looks - lights, landscaping, etc.. Congrats to all DO staff and facilities staff.*
- *Superintendent Elkington*
 - *The Support Staff contract was approved by association members and we are now finalizing the contract to be signed by all parties.*
 - *Several good candidates with experience have applied for some of our openings, very good to have extra experience coming in.*
- *Debbie - Agree with Rich on the District Office. Chef Andy did the food tonight for the Board Workshop tonight (super job) and RSU 9 Food Service has been collaborating with a camp in Wilton to serve meals.*
- *Gwen - Adding on that we have a great summer meal program, which is also serving at summer camp at Kineowatha. Great work, serving over 300 meals a day district-wide.*

IX. **Public Comment**

X. [Superintendent's Report](#) - Christian Elkington

A. **New Hires, Transfers, Resignations, and Retirements**

B. **Openings as of 7-16-2024**

The superintendent is not optimistic that all full-time professional and ed tech positions will be filled before the start of school. Estimating there will be 8-15 openings (as there has typically been per month the last 18 months) and when the year starts. Leaves of absence, transfers or staff being moved into open positions unfortunately opens up other positions, which are difficult to fill the later in the summer we go.

C. Summer course offering through JMG (Job's for Maine Graduates) Grant
Offered to 8-10 HS students through a small grant. It should have been part of an approval process but it was missed. Superintendent approved it to move forward, and will report on it to Ed Policy, where it should have gone first. Course involved students working and learning outside, wilderness activities, etc.

D. Connectivity Maine Grant Update

- *It was explained by Superintendent Elkington that this is in process, that no final decisions have been made yet by the Board. A presentation will take place at the first or 2nd meeting in August by Director of Adult Education, Mary Redmond-Luce and the collaborators of the grant.*
- *Discussion centered around an article in the paper that seemed to say it was a done deal. Has the grant been received or not?*
 - *It has not!*
- *The final grant offering should come to us at the end of August or early September. The board will then need to approve and sign off on it within 90 days. There are many months to go in the process.*
- *The Board approved permission to apply, but not permission to accept the grant if we got it. Connectivity Maine understands there are 2 large hurdles still to go, the board approving followed by the public. Connectivity Maine and our collaborators know we won't go to the communities until June of 2025 if the Board accepts it. It would need to be moved forward by 2026.*
- *We did get one of the largest offerings at \$1.8 million.*
- *It was asked if any other counties looked into it? We have partners who have agreed to work with us to develop this hub.*
- *If we purchase it we can rent out like we do with our other facilities, but it would need to be approved by the grant originators. Superintendent has talked to our attorney about it. The grant can be adjusted, but Connectivity Maine has to agree.*
- *We followed the process we always follow, when it comes to grants. This is just a very large grant. Concerns were shared about community understanding. Questions about costs down the road need to be clarified.*
- *No vote in the next 6-8 weeks (November at the latest). More info will need to be presented at the next few meetings.*
- *The plan is for this to not cost the district anything for the short and long term. We are 1 of 6 organizations/collaborators, but we took the lead to bring pieces together as we had the largest community footprint to do this work. If purchased, the building would be purchased for RSU 9.*

E. Turf Committee Update

Committee will be starting up. It has been hard to find experts willing to join. Our district doctor, Dr. Jacobs, is on-board

- F. **Other** - Active Shooter training update - went well, no issues, another one scheduled august 14, 15, 16 at UMF.

XI. Administrator Reports

- A. *None*

XII. Presentations

- A. *None*

XIII. Consent Agenda

- A. **New Hires/Resignations etc.**
- B. **Board Minutes - [6.25.24](#)**
- C. **Committee Report Outs and Minutes**
 - Operations Committee - none
 - Personnel & Finance - none
 - Educational Policy - none
- D. **Vote**

<i>Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.</i>	<p>Yeas: <i>Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</i></p> <p>Nays: Abstain: <i>Dina, Gerry, Katie</i> Vote: 722/0/195</p>	<p>Motion: Rich Ruhlin Seconded: Wayne Kinney Motion: Passed</p>
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XIV. New Business

- A. **[Proposed 2024/25 School Board of Directors Meeting Dates](#)** - Elkington Discussion
 - *No second meeting the week of Thanksgiving or before Xmas.*
 - **Budget Planning:**
 - *Want to get the budget process started early. Our goal would be for early April to sign budget warrants.*
 - *Superintendent stated that we can do an even better job if we are not rushed.*
 - *Presentation timeframe to come and budget workshop timeframe will be coming in November instead of January.*
 - *Katie Merrill will email and post dates of Board Meetings on the district website.*

Questions? - None

Vote

<i>Motion to approve dates for 24/25 board meetings as presented.</i>	Yeas: <i>Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</i> Nays: Abstain: Vote: 917/0/0	Motion: Debbie Smith Seconded: Rich Ruhlin Motion: Passed
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B. [Proposed 2024/25 Administrator Board Reports Schedule](#) - Elkington

Discussion -

- *Kyle is Board Booster Liaison. Can boosters have a board report? Supporting interscholastic varsity sports. Boosters do so much and the public needs to know about the money that is raised and not district funded.*
 - *We will find time to report at a Board Meeting.*

Questions? - None

Vote

<i>Motion to approve the Board Report Schedule as presented.</i>	Yeas: <i>Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</i> Nays: Abstain: Vote: 917/0/0	Motion: Rich Ruhlin Seconded: Josh Robbins Motion: Passed
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C. [Appoint District Physician for the 2024/25 School Year](#) - Elkington

Dr. Jacobs is very attentive and supportive to our district. The assessment funding we give goes to the Hospital for her support.

- *Motion to approve Dr. Emily Jacobs as the RSU 9 District Physician at a cost of \$2,000.00*
- *Vote*

<i>Motion to approve Emily Jacobs as the District Physician at a cost</i>	Yeas: <i>Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle</i>	Motion: Gwen Doak Seconded: Scott Erb
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<p>of \$2,000 for the 24/25 school year.</p>	<p>Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</p> <p>Nays: Abstain: Vote: 917/0/0</p>	<p>Motion: Passed</p>
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D. Town Assessment Signing - Gamache

- *Director of Finance - Documents need to be signed tonight by everyone (majority) and will be sent to the town's first thing tomorrow.*
- *Question about what is our per student cost per town?*
 - *It all depends on how you break down the #s. We will get the numbers out using one model and formula to the Finance Committee.*
 - *Weld pays the most per student, over \$20,000 per student using one formula. Based on the # of students and valuation.*
 - *Superintendent shared concerns that some differing numbers appear to be thrown about our communities using different formulas. Each town's number/% of cost is determined at the state level. Director Gamache explained that Weld's # is reduced or it would be even more because of a state circuit breaker.*
 - *Superintendent reminded the Board that RSU 9 gets over 50% of our district costs paid for by state aid. The superintendent and Director Gamache are willing to go to Weld and attend other select board meetings, or community meetings in the fall and winter.*
- *Final Forms - One form for each town, 10 forms signed by all Board members completed*

E. Use of Operations Reserve Account to finish Bjorn Center Infrastructure - Elkington

1. To complete the Infrastructure
 - a) [Estimate](#)
 - b) \$73,058.94 Balance in Bjorn Fund
 - c) \$185,665.16 from Operations Reserve
 - d) We knew going in that even after we reduced the scope of the work from the bids received that we would need to use some district funds.
2. *Funding Discussion*
 - a) *2.5 million was given by the Bjorn Foundation.*
 - b) *Project was put out to bid - 2 bids received for 3.8+ and 3.2 million.*
 - c) *We negotiated the project down to 2.9 million with the low bidder and used \$116,000 in earned interest.*

- d) We asked the Bjorn Foundation for more funds, they gave another 245,000.
 - (1) This meant that other district funding would be needed to make up the cost. We also applied for money from Franklin County (from their Fed funds) - and received \$125,000.
 - (a) Wanted to use it on individual equipment for Culinary
- e) Almost \$3 million in total revenue. \$2.745 million to start.
- f) We had change orders as some building needs that were missed in the design.
- g) We need another \$185,000 of district funds to finish the culinary section to make it usable. Includes walls, electrical plumbing, suppression system. This last room is a shell right now. We tried to see if we could do it ourselves and don't think it's possible to do it in a timely manner. In total about \$270,000 to finish the culinary infrastructure is needed.
- h) There is funding available that was approved by the voters - \$550,000 is now in the Capital Reserve, \$650,000 in SPED, \$656,000 in tech, \$100,000 in the fuel reserve.
- i) The Superintendent will ask about a fee reduction in the current specs. If approved there will be \$380,000 left in capital reserve.
- j) At this point we are trying to get this last space usable. There are other things not in the estimate. Some cooking will be limited unless we get a restaurant quality kitchen hood. Our goal is to find other funding for these items. Hood - 40-\$50,000 per hood. Other equipment such as: Stoves, ovens, and refrigerators not included. We need to piecemeal until we find other funding.
 - (1) Board Members want to see some more detail including a potential project schedule. We only have the construction company that has been great to work with for a little more time to help with this next step.

Questions

- Motion to approve using up to \$185,665.16 from the RSU 9 Operations Reserve Account

Vote

<p><i>Motion to approve using up to \$185,665.16 from the RSU 9 Operations Reserve Account to finish the Bjorn CTE Center Infrastructure.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Dee, Gwen, Rich, Kyle, Josh, Will, Gloria, Katie Amanda, Wayne, Scott, Greg, Gerry, Debbie Nays: Jeff Abstain: Vote: 876/41/0</p>	<p>Motion: Scott Erb Seconded: Wayne Kinney Motion: Passed</p>
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XV. Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) - Labor Contract Discussions w/Admin Association

- *Motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) - Labor Contract Discussion w/Admin Association*
- *Vote*

<p><i>Motion to go into Executive Session for Labor Contract Discussions with the Admin Association.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</i></p> <p><i>Nays:</i> <i>Abstain:</i> <i>Vote: 917/0/0</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Scott Erb</i> <i>Seconded: Gwen Doak</i> <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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In at 7:20pm
Returned at 7:26pm

XVI. Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) - Evaluation of Superintendent

- *Motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) - Evaluation of Superintendent*
- *Vote*

<p><i>Motion to go into Executive Session for Evaluation of the Superintendent.</i></p>	<p><i>Yeas: Dee Robinson, Gwen Doak, Rich Ruhlin, Kyle Fletcher, Josh Robbins, Gloria McGraw, Katie Martikke, Amanda Caruso, Jeff Barnum, Wayne Kinney, Scott Erb, Greg Kimber, Gerry Provencher, Dina Spenciner, Debbie Smith</i></p> <p><i>Nays:</i> <i>Abstain:</i> <i>Vote: 917/0/0</i></p>	<p><i>Motion: Gwen Doak</i> <i>Seconded: Scott Erb</i> <i>Motion: Passed</i></p>
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In at 7:28 pm
Returned at 7:41 pm

XVII. Adjourned at 7:42pm

NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

- August 13, 2024 - 6:30pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus
- Board Reports - Special Education, Technology

NEXT SCHEDULED COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Operations - August 6, 2024 - 5:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus
Personnel & Finance - August 6, 2024 - 6:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus
Educational Policy - August 6, 2024 - 7:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus