

March Agenda
Special Meeting of Trustees

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District #35 has been scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at the Gallatin Gateway School Multipurpose room.

(All policies mentioned in the agenda can be found at www.gallatingatewayschool.com.)

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Presiding Trustee's explanation of procedures to be followed for addressing the Board – (GGS Policy #1441)

Public Comment- Non Agenda Items- Public Comment- Sign in sheet- (GGS Policy #1441 & #1420F)

New Business

***Public Relations**

Discussion: 2006-2007 school budget (GGS Policy #7110)

Adjournment

For more information on agenda items, contact Superintendent Kim DeBruycker, 763-4415 ext. 13 or debruycker@gallatingatewayschool.com. (All policies mentioned in the agenda can be found at www.gallatingatewayschool.com.)

Special Meeting, Board of Trustees, Gallatin Gateway School District #35

Open Session

DATE: March 27, 2006

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Gallatin Gateway School Multipurpose Room

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Erik Yager, Chair
Helen Zinner, Vice Chair
Jess Holloway
Alec Nisbet
Cheryl Thiem

MEMBERS

ABSENT: None

STAFF

PRESENT: Kim DeBruycker, Superintendent; Carrie Fisher, District Clerk; Ken Mosby, Business Manager; Renae Myers, Teacher; Tom Vanderbeck, Teacher; and Scott Vollmer, Teacher.

OTHERS

PRESENT: Celia O'Connor, Pam Border, Lain Kay, Nikki Robbins, Kristin Horgan, John Vincent, County Commissioner; Doug Marshall, Wayne Thiem, Shawna Brenner, Ann Prescott, and Christie Francis.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Board Chair Erik Yager.

Board Chair Erik Yager explained the public comment process to be followed for addressing the Board in accordance with Gallatin Gateway School Policy #1441. He stated that prior to a vote the public may comment on agenda items. There will be time for public comment on non-agenda items. Public comment periods are not intended to be a question and answer session and may not include discussions of performance, evaluations or anything that may infringe on any person's right to privacy.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Lain Kay stated that she would like to have time available at a future Board meeting for the candidates running for the Board to provide the public with information about themselves and their reasons for running for office.

PUBLIC & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Board Chairman Erik Yager led a discussion with the community regarding the 2006-2007 budget considerations and requested community input regarding the needs for the upcoming year.

Public Comment: Lain Kay stated that she would like to see: 1) the addition of a part-time or full-time art teacher; 2) the addition of a full-time janitor; 3) the addition of a full-time secretary; and 4) the addition of two teachers so there is a teacher to teach every grade. Nikki Robbins asked the Board, "Where on the priorities is it to get a teacher for every grade?" Doug Marshall asked if classes that are currently combined due to only six

students would be combined all the way through to eighth grade. He encouraged the Board to get input from teachers. Mr. Marshall stated that keeping teachers happy and well paid should be a priority of the Board. He continued that the high cost of living in this area makes it hard for teachers to live comfortably. Lain Kay urged the Board to let the librarian be a librarian and to not have her teach classes. She stated that teachers' wages at Gallatin Gateway School are very low and Gallatin Gateway should be ashamed. Kristin Horgan asked if pay for teachers could increase without running a mill levy and if so, where would the money come from. She also asked the Board if it would be possible to offer all day everyday kindergarten next year and if so, when would that decision be made. Nikki Robbins urged the Board to receive input from teachers regarding combined grade classrooms and to place teacher compensation as a priority in an effort to keep them happy.

Celia O'Connor asked for clarification regarding health benefits for teachers. Doug Marshall clarified the legislative changes in funding and asked if there would be an increase to fund compensation increases for teachers. Lain Kay expressed concern about the law that allows children in Gallatin Gateway district who live more than three miles from the Gallatin Gateway School to attend Bozeman schools when they have an older sibling attending the high school. She recommended that rural schools form a coalition to combat that law as it is detrimental to small rural schools. Pam Border inquired on the final legislature funding decision for schools and stated that she felt running a mill levy is essential to the success of the school- "We need to have a levy, no questions," she said. Kristin Horgan stated that she was not aware of the election last year and felt horrible that the levy failed by six votes. Celia O'Connor agreed with Kristin and stated that several of her neighbors didn't know about the election last year. Lain Kay stated that Gallatin Gateway voters never receive information about the high school mill levy either. Ann Prescott stated that in her observation Gallatin Gateway voters are more supportive of Gallatin Gateway School than they are of the high school levies.

Doug Marshall commented that he felt the public relations at Gallatin Gateway School are great, the school makes great effort to inform the community, and the facility always looks good. Celia O'Connor stated that the new brochure handed out at the meeting is a great tool to inform individuals who don't have school children. Nikki Robbins recommended the Board send the new brochures out to the community with information about the programs that had been cut from the budget in past years. Lain Kay stated that the loss of the newsletter has had an impact on community involvement. Doug Marshall noted that the newsletter let people know what the school was doing and urged the Board to add the newsletter back into the budget. Celia O'Connor recommended that the Board not send the newsletter to residents too often and felt that three times a year would be most effective. Kristin Horgan agreed with Mrs. O'Connor and stated that three times a year is more feasible for the newsletter production staff to handle than a newsletter once a month.

Lain Kay clarified the reasons for the addition of a school counselor for the 05-06 year and asked if that would continue to keep accreditation. She also asked if the school received any tax money from forest funds. Shawna Brenner asked what the maximum amount the Board could request voters to approve in a general fund levy and if that levy passed, would it be enough to add everything to the budget that was discussed tonight. She stated that PIE could possibly call voters using a phone tree to inform them about the ballot issues. Lain Kay recommended that PIE target certain voters in the district and also call people to see if they need a ride to come and vote or if they would like absentee ballots. Shawna Brenner expressed concern about not filling the two teaching positions cut from the budget this year and as a result not ever having enough funds to re-fill those positions. Lain Kay stated that combining classes can be beneficial in some ways. Doug Marshall stated that even if the school lacks funding and is juggling small class sizes, the students in those grades should have the same opportunities as other students/classes. Kristin Horgan stated that combining classes can be beneficial in many ways and that the students have an increased exposure to more teachers and often times have up to three teachers in their classroom at a time. Lain Kay asked if the school was promoting part-time enrollment by home school children. She also stated that rumors within the community about the school often deter new families from visiting the school. Scott Vollmer stated that he had personally visited with a few home school families and no matter how hard the school tries to get these families to enroll, they will always home school.

Lain Kay requested that the Board mail a newsletter prior to the election to inform voters about the ballot issues. She also recommended that the Board include information regarding the candidates running for the Board. Nikki Robbins indicated that she liked the idea of having the opportunity to provide information in the newsletter to residents and voters in Gallatin Gateway. Tom Vanderbeck asked if there was any chance of re-drawing school district lines. Christie Francis stated that the Board needed to ask for some sort of mill levy even if it was a small amount to prove to voters that the school is not being greedy. Kristin Horgan noted the high voter turnout in Gallatin Gateway and stated that she wished the Board would hear from those

individuals that vote no. John Vincent stated that the recent lawsuit against the state by the Quality School Coalition probably isn't over and speculated that "it will be a rocky road for a while." He continued to inform individuals that local tax payers have had to bear too much of the burden to fund quality education and the state should be properly funding school. Christie Francis noted that the money to fund schools still comes from the same pot and it has to come from taxes- either gas tax, sales tax, property tax, etc. "People still pay taxes," she stated. John Vincent stated that the state as a whole is likely to remain resistant to a sales tax and noted that he is a sales tax proponent. The Board thanked all the attendees for their participation and comments.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Trustee Jess Holloway to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Alec Nisbet seconded the motion. For: Holloway, Nisbet, Thiem, Yager and Zinner. Opposed: none. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Erik Yager, Board Chairman

Carrie Fisher, District Clerk