The regular council meeting of the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative was held via Google Meet on March 7, 2024 for the purpose of considering business to come before the Council. Vice Chair, Kristi Jacobs, presided over the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**
Kristi Jacobs called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

Members Present  
Amsterdam—Marisa Stewart; Anderson—Kristi Jacobs; Big Sky—Dustin Shipman; Harrison—Sharyl Allen; LaMotte—Spencer Johnson; Monforton—Laura Axtman

Members Absent: Ennis—Casey Klasna; Gateway—Kelly Henderson; Gallatin Co. Supt.—John Nielson; West Yellowstone—Kevin Flannigan; Willow Creek—Bonnie Lower

Visitors: None

2. **Public Comments**  
None

Staff Present
Lani Smith, Director; Joyce Schmidt, Clerk & Business Manager; Riley Russell, Executive Assistant; Kim Wegner-Mccauley, School Psychologist/Special Education Coordinator

Staff Absent None

3. **Consent Agenda**
Approval of  
Motion to approve the minutes of January 18, 2024 as well as expenditures (#317828- #317858) (January-February).

Motion: Dustin Shipman  
Second: Spencer Johnson  
- Passed Unanimously.

4. **New Business:**

a.) **Consideration of School Psychologist Hire**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)
Nicole Bottsford-Miller interviewed last week and accepted the position. She previously worked in the Billings District and moved to the area. She interviewed for the full time position but asked to be only .8FTE which is about 150 days a year. She was asked if she could add an additional 5 days to her contract to help out the other Psychologists. She has a lot of experience and will be an excellent addition to the team.

Motion to consider School Psychologist for hire.

Motion: Sharyl Allen
Second: Marisa Stewart -Passed Unanimously.

b.) Business Manager’s Report

(Informational)

The Board received ending cash balances per fund reconciled with the Gallatin County Finance Department [GCFD], those numbers included December 2023 & January 2024. Tentative ending cash balances for February were also provided but excluded interest earnings. The GCFD will issue the February reports in late March at which point our interest earnings will be known to us. Based on previous years, the cash balances are as expected for this point in the FY.

The IDEA-B & Preschool Incentive Grant reports for reimbursement have been submitted to OPI for the previous three months comprising December 2023 through February 2024. All requests have been paid or approved as of the meeting date. In addition, all requests were submitted by the OPI cutoff date resulting in a two week reimbursement turn around as opposed to a six week or greater time frame. As of today, OPI has yet to correct the Preschool Incentive Grant payments being counted against the current FY allocation rather than the reallocated total.

The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Instructor personnel costs have been invoiced to the Amsterdam SD for December 2023 & January 2024 as of January 23rd. There will be no invoice to the SD for February & Sharon Roe, Business Manager for the SD has been notified.

Much of the two-year comparison differences for February can be explained by changes in staff costs [pay increases, the increase of other costs associated with staff, & the percentage changes for some positions between funds]. Within the IDEA-B grant other differences include the significant increase for our external audit, the increase for our liability insurance & the new three year building rent contract. Over time we have begun capturing more & more of the on-personnel costs in ‘other support services’ [2490]. To name a few of the primary contributors–fleet costs for fuel & maintenance, all supplies regardless of discipline now that we have returned to our pre-COVID funding sources, as well as the changes each year to the percentage assigned to the personnel costs for administrative staff [Director, Business Manager & Administrative
Strom & Associates has completed their fieldwork & we are waiting for the completed report to be issued. I reached out to Lee Martin on the 7th & was told they have been short staffed & will get our report reviewed & issued as soon as possible. They appreciate our patience.

c.) **Director’s Report**

(Informational)

i. Montana School Recruitment Project

Lani encouraged the Board to use their services as she knows many are looking to fill Special Education Teacher positions and they have been an excellent resource in the past.

ii. Staff Recruitment Update

All staff have filled out and returned their Professional Intention forms and as of now it looks like only an additional SLP will be needed. Kaitlin is considering increasing her time to 3 days but as of now she has another job offer. Lani is going to reach out to previously employed SLPs and Aids to see if any are interested.

iii. Special Education Coordinators

Kim is employed as a School Psychologist as well as Special Education Coordinator. Jamie is just employed as a School Psychologist but she has been taking on a lot of Coordinator roles as well so Lani is considering making it a title so she has a consistent contract.

iv. Utilization of Kerri Norick (MSDB)

Kerri is getting inundated with a lot of reports indicating visual processing issues. When a referral comes up the School Psychologist needs to be notified so that they can be the point of contact with Kerri as she covers a large area and it would make it more streamlined for her. There is not a lot of guidance with MT rules when it comes to vision referrals so Kerri can help with that but we need to be respectful of her time and caseload. Kerri will also come to a staff meeting to discuss it further. Shey Mayland, Audiologist, can also help with determination and looking at audiograms.

v. 504s and Consultation with GMSEC
This is something that is constantly coming up. School Psychologists are getting pulled in to look at observations or answer questions about Special Education Law. If questions arise regarding Special Education Law then Lani suggests encouraging 504 Coordinators to go to their Superintendents first to help free up some of the School Psychologist’s time. 504 laws are constantly changing so it is important to stay up to date on training. Kirsti has Bea’s packet if anyone is interested and there is also a training session in September.

vi. Special Committee for Staff Negotiations

5. Board Meeting Schedule: Projected 2023-2024 Third Thursday of the Month (Zoom/In-Person)
   *no less than 6 meetings per year

1. **April 18\(^{th}\) @ 9:00am**
2. **May 16\(^{th}\) @ 9:00am** Change to May 9\(^{th}\)
3. **June 20\(^{th}\) In Person, Location TBD @ 11:00am** Change to June 11\(^{th}\)

6. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:04am.

   Motion: Spencer Johnson
   Second: Marisa Stewart
   Passed Unanimously.

Submitted by: __________________________ Date: ______________________

Board Chair: __________________________ Date: ______________________