Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative
Regular Council Meeting
8/21/2025

The Regular Council meeting of the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative was held at the Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative Office on August 21, 2025 for the purpose of considering business to come before the Council. Chair, Laura Axtman, presided over the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Laura Axtman called the meeting to order at 11:09 am.

Members Present

- **Amsterdam**– Marisa Stewart;
- **Anderson–** Spencer Johnson;
- **Big Sky**–Dustin Shipman;
- **Ennis–** Jared Moretti; (virtual)
- **Gallatin Co. Supt.–** John Nielson;
- **Gateway**–Kelly Henderson;
- **Harrison**–Stephanie Stephans, Designated Harrison Board Representative (virtual)
- **LaMotte–** Scott Poloff;
- **Monforton–** Laura Axtman;
- **West Yellowstone**– Kevin Flannigan;
- **Willow Creek–** Bonnie Lower

Visitors: None

2. Public Comments

None

Staff Present Kim Wegner-McCauley, Director; Joyce Schmidt, Clerk & Business Manager;
Riley Russell, Executive Assistant; Laura Axtman, Marisa Stewert, Spencer Johnson, Scott Poloff, Virtual-Jared Moretti, Stephanie Stephens
Staff Absent

3. Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes	a.	Approval of June 25, 2025 GMSEC Board Meeting
Minutes & Expenditures	b.	Approval of expenditures: (#3318214, 3318215)-June, (#3318216-3318233)-July

Motion to approve minutes and expenditures.

Motion: Spencer

Second: Marisa - Passed Unanimously.

4. New Business:

a.) **Business Manager's Report:**

(Informational)

The reconciled cash totals by fund were provided by the Business Manager for June & tentative fund totals for July. Joyce explained the tentative June total for the special revenue fund [315] presented at the previous meeting was considerably greater due to the timing of the June IDEA-B requests that were received uncharacteristically by the GCFD in early July.

Joyce provided a brief explanation of when the IDEA-B & Preschool Incentive Grant approvals/
payment totals as well as the anticipated spending authority carryover at Federal FY end. Should OPI delay the opening of the new FY in the e-grant system beyond September 25th the July through September requests will be submitted thereby decreasing the anticipated spending authority carryover.

June expenditures included the unanticipated vacation & sick leave payout for the outgoing director resulting in exceeding our budget projection by approximately $12,000. In addition to the director, we had five additional employees leave the co-op but their discretionary leave payout total was not significant. The amount budgeted each year anticipates some discretionary leave payout for outgoing employees & a payout of some vacation leave for office staff.

The total expenditures across funds for the FY exceeded budget by approximately $6,000. After decreasing the total by expenditures that are not budgeted each year, namely Medicaid & vehicle purchases, the total comes to $1,188,742 or 97% of budget.

July expenditures were consistent with past years primarily comprising our insurance blanket policy of approximately $27,000; accounting software maintenance & Playground IEP subscription of $5,400; the annual policy manual maintenance of nearly $1,300 as well as the payroll for office staff.

August expenditures are expected to be significantly less & are presently $8,338. This total includes the annual payment for hearing conservation & the building rent for September.

The new vendor contracted by the state for the MAC Claiming–Random moments offered training in mid-July for completing their version of the Financial Data Report [FDR] & recorded the training for those unable to attend. The due date for submitting the FDR for each participating SD was August 15th & all our participating SDs met the due date.

Joyce shared that Strom & Associates has scheduled their fieldwork for our external audit of FY 2024-25 to begin October 6th.

b.) **Approval of Trustee's Financial Summary Report**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Joyce shared that the TFS was submitted by August 15th as required by state law. However, should the Board want changes made to the report OPI would return it for changes & resubmission. The Board had no questions or requested changes.

Motion to approve Trustee's Financial Summary Report.

Motion: Spencer Johnson
Second: Scott Pologg -Passed Unanimously.

c.) **Annual Signatures for Interlocal Agreement**

(Informational)

Nothing was changed or updated beyond formatting. Board members were reminded of a change made last year stating if they miss more than two meetings they must designate someone to attend.

d.) **Approval of Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative 2025-2026 Employee Handbook**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

The previous Special Education Director, Lani Smith, had been updating the handbook. Sick and Personal leave has been changed to discretionary leave and there are changes to how SLP's ASHA credits are accumulated. The handbook is now ready to be submitted. Marisa Stewart had a question regarding the process for making changes to the handbook. The Co-op's attorney provides updates and suggestions.

Motion to approve Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative 2025-26 Employee Handbook.

Motion: Spencer Johnson
Second: Marisa Stewart -Passed Unanimously

e.) **Child Find Developmental Screening Days**

(Informational)

Dates were proposed to the Board with the option to make changes. Flyers will be provided to secretaries once approved. An SLP and Psych will be assigned to each screening as well as Audiologist, Shey Mayland. LaMotte had questions regarding who is to be screened and ages.

f.) **Director's Report**

(Informational)

i. Staffing Update

Still in need of SLP's and Psychs. The Co-op is still down 2 FTE Psych positions which has caused Kim to keep her schools from last year. She has reached out to three Psychs in the area that are willing to offer support if needed. Lani Smith will also be an on-call Psych in Ennis and Big Sky. Kylee Siegal is a .8FTE and will be working as an SLP-Aid with Rock Creek Therapy at Anderson, Monforton, and West Yellowstone. She may need a laptop available at schools beyond her assigned laptop and an assigned physical space to work. Psych's schedules may look a bit different this year and the Co-op appreciates all the flexibility in this not ideal but workable situation. Positions will continue to be posted.

ii. School Psychologist Expectations

Psychs schedules may look different this year due to the shortage and they may not be at certain schools every week and may be at certain schools more. It will be up to the Psychs and their schools to come up with an amicable schedule. Kim is happy that the Psychs the Co-op does have are all competent and experienced.

iii. SPED Team meetings

It might be beneficial to make some changes regarding the SPED team meetings to help free up the Psychs due to the shortage. The Director suggested holding the meetings every other month instead of monthly. Psychs previously were in charge of setting the agenda and running the meetings but it may be a good idea to switch it to more of a collaborative effort going forward. It was suggested to use a template that case managers could majorly fill out and Psychs fill out where needed. Discussion ensued around how each school could adjust.

g.) **2025-2026 Personnel: School Psychologist Contract Amendments**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

i. Contract Amendment for Kim Wegner-McCauley to add 20 additional contracted days (20-day equivalent @ daily rate of $418.18/day equaling $8363.60)

Kim shared the proposed amendment was based on past practice. Board discussion of alternative options including a stipend or paying hourly for additional time up to a maximum number of hours was entertained.

Motion to amend contract as presented for the FY 2025-26 school year.

Motion: Marisa Stewart
Second: Spencer Johnson -Passed Unanimously.

ii. Contract Amendment for Nicole Botsford-Miller to add 5 additional contracted days (5-day equivalent @ daily rate of $421.00/day equaling $2105.00)

Same situation as Kim. Nicole's contract approved in the spring already had 5 additional days added so there will be a total of 10 additional days. There was discussion of how close this puts her to full time and why she doesn't want to be full time instead. As of now she wants Fridays off but this may be a consideration for next year.

Motion to amend contract as presented for the FY 2025-26 school year.

Motion: Marisa Stewart
Second: Spencer Johnson -Passed Unanimously.

h.) **2025-2026 Personnel: School Psychologist Offer of Contract**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

i. 1st Contract offer for Lani Smith, On-call School Psychologist, $60/hr (up to 600 hours); $36,000

Lani is willing to assist at Big Sky and Ennis as needed but does not have a set schedule.

Motion to approve contract as presented for the FY 2025-26 school year.

Motion: Scott Poloff
Second: Spencer Johnson -Passed Unanimously.

i.) **<u>2025-2026 Personnel: Virtual Speech Language Pathologist</u>**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

1st Contract offer for Rock Creek Virtual Speech Language Pathologist: $83/hr (up to 40 hrs per week), $127,488

The contract they shared stated it will be closer to 32 hours a week instead of the 40 budgeted for so there is a possibility of saving some money. If the Co-op approves the contract they sent there is a stipulation that states that either party may pull out of the contract but if the Co-op does before giving 60 days notice then they will need to pay $12.50 for every student seen which equates to about 40 thousand dollars. The contract will automatically roll over for the next school year unless notified 30 days before. This will be on the agenda for January. Everything through Rock Creek is virtual but Kylee will be used as an SLP-A. The Director as well as Scott had previously worked with them and had nothing but good things to say.

Motion to offer contract to Rock Creek as presented.

Motion: Marisa Stewart
Second: Spencer Johnson -Passed Unanimously.

j.) **<u>Approval of Final Gallatin-Madison Special Education Cooperative FY 26 Budget</u>**

(Motion/Discussion/Action)

Grant numbers were finalized and IDEA-B was lower than expected. The Rock Creek number was also updated. These were the final updates to the budget.

Motion to approve GMSEC budget for FY 2025-26 as presented.

Motion: Spencer Johnson
Second: Scott Poloff -Passed Unanimously.

4. Board Meeting Schedule: **Projected 2025-2026 Third Thursday of the Month (Zoom/In-Person) *no less than 5 meetings per year**

a. October 9 th (MEA October 16th & 17th)
b. January 15th In Person
c. February 19th
d. April 16th (could be removed)

e. May 21st
f. June 18th In Person

5. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting at __12:08pm____.

Motion: Marissa Stewart
Second: Spencer Johnson -Passed Unanimously.

Submitted by: ____ Date: _______________________

Board Chair: ____ Date: _______________________