



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees – Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting

May Butler Center | 55 S. Rodney Ave

Monday October 7, 2019 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Terry Beaver, Committee Chair	Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Jeff Hindoin, Committee Member	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Siobhan Hathhorn, Committee Member	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Stacy Collette, Human Resources Administrator

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 12:00pm by Committee Chair, Terry Beaver.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None was offered.

IV. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Demographics Study Update

Dr. Ream stated Cropper has not yet returned his phone calls. He said he learned Bozeman's demographics study was conducted in-house, and Missoula's was conducted by a Missoula firm, for whom he would receive contact information. Dr. Ream added he anticipates the Missoula firm's bid may be higher than the district anticipated spending. Ms. Hathhorn asked if Missoula's demographic study encompassed more growth planning. Dr. Ream confirmed.

Dr. Ream offered three solutions for the demographics study:

- Continue to try contacting Cropper
- Conduct the study in-house
- Contact another national firm

Mr. Beaver asked if the district currently had the personnel to facilitate a study, and Dr. Ream replied that it did not. Ms. Hathhorn asked who conducted the study for Great Falls, and Dr. Ream answered that he would confirm it was Cropper. Mr. Hindoin asked how much data was available through Edulog during the last demographics study. Ms. Ridgway answered that

Cropper used data from Edulog and PowerSchool. Mr. Hindoin said the district has a lot more in-house expertise regarding Edulog than during the last demographics study, so while the district doesn't have extra personnel, it does have extra data.

Mr. McKay said data from Edulog lacks future projections. He continued the district can roll forward existing data but requires a third party to provide projections. Ms. Ridgway referenced a local company – Dodge – with whom the district worked for years to obtain current demographic data. She agreed that while it could provide baseline data, it does not contain a predictive analysis.

Ms. Hathhorn noted a demographics study in Helena may be more complex than other cities due to its smaller feeder towns. Mr. Beaver said the area of projected growth isn't difficult to predict in Helena, but it raises questions about whether the district would need to shift boundaries.

Mr. Hindoin recommended the district hire a consultant for the demographics study and the committee concurred. Dr. Ream answered that he will move on to other options if Cropper does not return his phone call within a week. Mr. Beaver reiterated the district could spend up to \$80,000 without completing the RFP process. Dr. Ream answered that he anticipated costs to be \$20,000.

B. 7th Avenue Gym

Dr. Ream said that the district felt it was important to finish the three new schools prior to deciding what to do with this property. He referenced the feasibility study, which Trustee Sarah Sullivan helped write, and noted it provided extensive information, including background on similar historic buildings that had undergone renovations and those that had not. Dr. Ream mentioned several possible usage ideas, including a STEM environment, an art space, an open market concept, and a downtown hub/mixed-use space.

Dr. Ream said the building currently was used for storage, which would be its purpose until another plan developed. He noted that the district – or whoever purchased it - would need \$3.2-3.7 million to renovate the building. He added the district wouldn't sell the building if the buyer didn't have a plan in place. Dr. Ream said the district didn't want a vacant building next to a school.

Ms. Hathhorn inquired into the historical significance of the building, and Ms. Ridgway answered that the building was probably more historic than the old Central School and was perhaps on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Beaver expressed a concern that the building was a liability to the district. He said he was in favor of demolishing the building and utilizing the space for Central School, adding the building was not structurally sound or well maintained.

Dr. Ream said that the feasibility study was a public document that interested organizations might find beneficial. He continued that there would be information on the document related to what the land beneath the building would be worth, adding that the study would reference other historic buildings in the vicinity and situation as the gym.

Dr. Ream referenced the size of the feasibility and said he wanted to determine an abbreviated version that could be presented to the board for the next board meeting. He said he will work

with the company who created the feasibility study to highlight the most pertinent elements from the study.

Ms. Hathhorn inquired into the ramifications from the community if the district decided to demolish the building. Dr. Ream answered that dangerous building materials were noted in the feasibility study, so if the study was presented to the community, they should agree with the decision.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/BOARD COMMENTS

Dr. Ream asked the committee the format in which they would like to see the full feasibility study. Mr. Beaver asked if the document could be reduced to a synopsis. Dr. Ream said he would check with the architect in charge of the study.

Mr. Hindoin asked for the status on remaining bond money to be used for safety and security. He recommended it might be more beneficial to be discussed in a Facilities Committee meeting than a Bond Committee meeting.

Mr. Beaver asked if the district would pursue buying the vacant lots to the east of Jim Darcy Elementary School. Dr. Ream answered that the price would have to be reduced for purchase to be feasible.

Mr. Beaver inquired into the status of the Smith Elementary School fields for soccer. Dr. Ream said he would talk to Kali Kind to see if the project was on track. He continued that next steps include adding public access points and branding the fields as HHS's home fields. Mr. McKay added that existing questions include determining restrooms/visiting team changing rooms, if there will be access to the Smith school gym, and if the mobile bleachers at the softball fields will be moved to the soccer fields for games.

Mr. Beaver asked for a status update on the fields at Rossiter Elementary School. Dr. Ream answered the district denied a use request from a group who wanted to remove the baseball/softball surfaces and use the space for more than 90 days. He said district policy prohibits one group from dominating a facility and not allowing others the opportunity to use it.

Mr. Beaver inquiring into the water pumping on Kessler Elementary School property. Dr. Ream said he would get the current status from Ms. Kind, but the last update was that the district told the county they could not have an easement across the Kessler parking lot. He noted that while an easement may not negatively affect the school, it would limit any future growth or repositioning.

Mr. McKay offered a Flood Mitigation Project update close to Rossiter Elementary School. He said contractors had been paving on the entrance and exit on the bus loop, installing metal guardrail on the roadside, digging deep ditches along Montana Avenue, and installing a fence between the parking lot and the ditch. Dr. Ream added that Rossiter parents were looking to the district for communication even though it was a county project.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:57pm by Mr. Beaver. The next Facilities and Maintenance Committee meeting will be November 4, 2019.