



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 – Budget and Programs Committee

May Butler Center | 55 S. Rodney Ave

Friday, January 10, 2020 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Committee:

Jeff Hindoien, Committee Chair
John McEwen, Committee Member

Excused Absence:

Sarah Sullivan, Committee Member

Others:

Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator
Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President
Julie Heller, Community Member

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair, Jeff Hindoien, called the meeting to order at 12:03pm.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None was offered.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Muszkiewicz emailed in requested changes as follows: revise to “collectively” in Section VA, and revise to “soluble” in Section VC.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Year-to-Date Budget

Dr. Ream presented budget documents to the committee and said Ms. Mickelson had changed the format to what was presented to the board prior to the formation of the Budget and Programs

Committee. He described the format as easy to produce and more detailed. Ms. Shawn voiced her appreciation on behalf of educators for producing this format.

Ms. Mickelson addressed the budget documents and said para salaries look like they're in the red, but they will be recoded into the tuition fund. She also noted that elementary custodians appeared to be over budget, but their salaries weren't negotiated until after the 35%/65% split. Ms. Mickelson said utility budgets were nearly doubled at the new schools to account for the increased size and functionality, but the district won't know the accuracy of that estimation until running the air conditioning systems.

Mr. McEwen asked for clarification on the tuition fund. Ms. Mickelson replied it was a special permissive levy fund for students attending another district or in detention centers. She added it also pays for one-on-one paras for Special Education students. Mr. McEwen asked if the fund was broken down between elementary and high school. Ms. Mickelson replied that it was. She added \$1.25 million of the fund was used for Special Education, and \$20,000 was used for students in detention centers.

Ms. Mickelson voiced a concern over having had no room in the elementary budget to include termination pay and said this year's pay would come from the interlocal fund. She added that in future years, \$500,000 will need to be included in the elementary termination pay budget. Dr. Ream added the district had termination pay budgeted for 40 retirees, but not for additional retirees. Ms. Collette said the deadline for announcing retirement for educators and administrators is January 15, but there was no deadline for paras, custodians, independent employees, or exempt employees. Ms. Shawn added clarification that the January 15 deadline only applied if educators and administrators wanted to receive the \$9,000 bonus; if employees retire after that, they only receive sick payout and only if they have been with the district for at least 10 years.

B. Multi-Year Budget Projection Update

Receiving no additional questions on the year-to-date budget, Ms. Mickelson addressed the multi-year budget projections. She began by describing the process through which Mr. McKay determined projected enrollment, which factored historic enrollment data and state projections where applicable. Ms. Mickelson continued that after receiving projections from Mr. McKay, she projected ANB based on the number of students.

Ms. Shawn asked which year East Helena would be fully occupied and would result in flat enrollment at Helena High School. Mr. McKay answered that would happen when the current 8th grade class was seniors.

Dr. Ream added that while Mr. McKay's projections were important for staffing, Ms. Mickelson's projections were important for budgeting. He said staff had been looking at state growth

projections and Helena's role in that growth, adding the district didn't want to project for the state's anticipated growth when they knew Helena enrollment was flat based on 20-year historic data.

Ms. Mickelson outlined a few key projections affecting the multi-year budget projections:

- next year's kindergarten enrollment at 585
- 40 estimated out-of-district transfers for next year
- An annual difference of -15 students due to average matriculation numbers from year-to-year (due to students who move, transfer, dropout, etc.)
- a 3% shrinkage at the high school level between fall and spring enrollment

Mr. Hindoien said the adjusted split between elementary and high school budgets resulted in budget projections looking better than last year. Janelle concurred, adding it was a more accurate estimate. Next, she will work with Todd Watkins to project expenditures for the next five years, including salaries and benefits, which will include an average increase of 2%/3% based on the variation of annual pay scale steps. Dr. Ream added clarification that the current inflationary increase in State funding was over 1%, and a dramatic increase above that norm was not anticipated for the next legislative session.

Dr. Ream said these projections will be presented to the board by Mr. Watkins at the January 28, 2020, board work session. He added that the real concern is not as pertinent to next year's budget but rather, the years that follow (FY22 and FY23). He cited that decisions today have ramifications for the future. He continued that negotiations couldn't begin until common ground is established in relation to current and future financial situation. Mr. Hindoien confirmed that Mr. Watkins will report to the board on January 28, with information provided from Ms. Mickelson. Dr. Ream added the meeting will be recorded and made available to employees who wished to watch.

C. High School Master Schedule and Staffing Issues

Mr. McKay provided the committee with an update on the high school master schedule process. She said he has been working with high school principals to determine the needs for next year for anticipated sizes of the student bodies. Mr. McKay said he and the principals were trying to match who was retiring with transfer requests. He continued that while they were in the initial phase, they did know how enrollment numbers would come in. Mr. McKay outlined a few challenges on which he and the principals were working:

- the effect on staffing in the instance of a large incoming class of freshman and a smaller exiting senior class, and how staffing could be shifted to accommodate the discrepancy
- declining enrollment at one high school, and increasing enrollment at the other
- matching student needs and programs with appropriate staffing

Mr. McKay said he and the principals currently were working on best case scenarios and would next look at the financial future.

Ms. Collette addressed the staffing side of these projections, saying the Human Resources department currently was examining known and projected retirees, attrition, certified staff, non-tenured staff, and hard-to-fill positions, realizing fewer students would affect the number of teachers. Dr. Ream said the district anticipated adding classes, a strategic decision made a while ago. He added growth was good for the culture and good for students.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. McEwen referenced a letter received from the city saying it would no longer provide assistance with the Vigilante Parade. Dr. Ream said the district would have to figure out how to make it work in the future. Mr. McKay added the district doesn't own the equipment to execute the parade and would have to rent it. He said if district employees were doing parade management, they were neglecting other responsibilities like monitoring students. Dr. Ream clarified the email referenced parades in general, not specifically the Vigilante Parade. Mr. McKay said he would conduct some fact-finding and price out potential increased costs.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hindoien adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm. The next Budget and Programs Committee meeting will be February 7, 2020.