



Board of Trustees – Budget and Programs Committee

Friday, October 2, 2020 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Committee:

John McEwen, Committee Chair
Sarah Sullivan, Committee Member
Terry Beaver, Committee Member
(*excused absence*)

Others:

Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Education Technology Coordinator
Jane Shawn, Helena Education Association President
Nicky Twitchell, member of the public

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair, John McEwen, called the meeting to order at 12:06pm.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The September 4, 2020, committee meeting minutes were reviewed.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

1. Budget to Date Update

Ms. Mickelson presented an update to the committee on the budget to date with the following highlights:

- The hybrid model is complex and expensive.

- When the CARES funds expire after December 30, the extra staff who had been hired would be paid from the general fund. Ms. Mickelson confirmed this equated to \$650,000 at the elementary level and \$400,000 at the high school level. Paras had not been included in these estimates.
- The positive number on the administrative salaries last time was reflective of administrative salaries that had not been entered at the time.

Ms. Sullivan asked Ms. Mickelson if she had additional comments on the report. Ms. Mickelson replied the highest priority should be addressing the building reserve. She recommended not addressing the technology levy until after the technology department assessment.

Mr. McEwen asked what wasn't being purchased as a result of the necessity of hiring additional staff. Ms. Mickelson replied the additional expense of staffing wasn't a crisis for this year; if it became an issue, additional expenditures would be paid from the interlocal fund. Dr. Ream added he was optimistic additional federal funding would become available this spring. If it did not, there were interlocal funds and reserves in place for just such purposes.

Mr. McEwen asked for clarification on the hybrid model requiring more staff. Dr. Ream answered the hybrid model required additional paras, childcare for staff, and para-proctors. Mr. McEwen requested clarification on whether childcare for staff was permanent. Dr. Ream answered it would be paid only this year; it was the only way to keep employees engaged.

2. Agenda Planning for the 2020/2021 School Year

Dr. Ream presented an overview of what the committee had decided to discuss for the school year in a calendar format. He asked the committee if they wanted to hire a third party to facilitate a multiyear budget projection. He added it was a lot of work for the Human Resources and Budget Departments, who did most of the work.

Dr. Ream said the October pull-dates had been added to the November committee meeting agenda.

A discussion on the technology department assessment also would occur at a future committee meeting. Dr. Ream added that discussion would include:

- What's working and what's not working; what improvements can be made
- Budgetary effects of any changes
- Potential redesign of the 12-year-old organization chart
- Increased staff expectations
- Appropriate staffing for the current model

Ms. Sullivan asked for an estimate on the number of additional staff that would be recommended. Mr. Myers answered he wanted to continue to run the department conservatively, but it should be twice as large to support the increased devices and needs.

Ms. Sullivan asked if there were plans to obtain feedback from parents on technology. Mr. Myers responded there was data from the Panorama survey sent to families last spring along with informal feedback received this fall from staff, students, and families.

Ms. Mickelson said that once an assessment of the technology department had been conducted, the board would be able to determine what the levy should be. Dr. Ream added the levy would provide a long-term solution to technology funding.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

There were no board comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McEwen adjourned the meeting at 12:50pm.