



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 Finance Committee

Thursday, February 16, 2021 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Committee Members:

John McEwen, Committee Chair
Sarah Sullivan, Committee Member
Terry Beaver, Committee Member

Others:

Tyler Ream, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Tim McMahon, Activities Director
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator
Gary Myers, Education Technology Director
Sean Maharg, Special Education Administrator
Sean Morrison, Special Education Administrator
Michelle Schweyen, Assistant Accountant

Jonna Swartz, Educator
Christine Roberts, member of the public

Lisa Lowney, Principal
Tia Wilkins, Principal
Rex Weltz, Principal
John Stilson, Principal
Brian Cummings, Principal
Justine Alberts, Principal
Craig Crawford, Principal
Trish Klock, Principal
Nick Radley, Principal
Jill Nyman, Principal
Lona Carter, Principal
Steve Thennis, Principal
Wynn Randall, Principal
Carrie Owen, Principal
Dawn Rowling, Assistant Principal
Stephanie Thennis, Assistant Principal
Cal Boyle, Principal
Kathy Kidder, Assistant Principal
Erin Maxwell, Assistant Principal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair, John McEwen, called the meeting to order at 12:09pm.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

The January 21, 2021, committee meeting minutes were reviewed.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

1. Year to Date Budget Review

Ms. Mickelson presented current year-to-date budget updates to the committee and noted the deficit in educator and technology salaries was the result of additional unanticipated hires. Mr. McEwen asked if ESSR funds could be used for those salaries. Ms. Mickelson replied ESSR funds would be used to pay for intervention and recovery.

2. Market Analysis Project: Salary Scale Comparative Analysis (Part I)

Ms. Collette presented the market analysis findings to the committee. She noted the market analysis was based on the following comparisons:

- occupational comparisons in public schools similar in size, demographic and function
- the local Helena job market
- Department of Labor and Industry market data.

The analysis was conducted for all seven employee groups:

- Teachers and Contracted Staff
- Paraprofessionals
- Secretaries
- Independent Employees (Information Technology, non-represented employees)
- Custodian and Maintenance
- the five Crafts unions
- Administrators

Ms. Collette provided the committee the following information on each employee group:

- a description of each classification
- contracted hours
- daily and hourly rate
- historical context
- date of next negotiations period

Ms. Collette reminded the group of recruitment and retention procedures, which included reviewing the market by specific position before recommending adjustments within the pay schedule through negotiations or administrative adjustments.

Ms. Collette provided an assessment of each employee group that included pay, cafeteria, benefits, and market comparisons. She concluded the next steps would be to assess what adjustments were necessary to bring each group to market comparable.

Mr. McEwen asked if there was a different pay range for elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Ms. Collette answered there was. Mr. McEwen asked if there way a pay distinction among elementary schools. Ms. Collette answered there was not. Mr. McEwen asked if other AA districts made distinctions among elementary schools. Ms. Collette replied they did not; the work and scope was considered the same regardless of size.

Mr. McEwen asked for confirmation that assistant principals and principals were paid less in Helena than in other districts and asked for an approximation of the difference. Ms. Collette replied it was a significant amount.

Mr. McEwen requested further examination of the independent job classifications.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the district could afford aligning administrative salaries with the rest of the state. Ms. Collette advised the committee to apply the same methodology across employee categories since that hadn't been standard practice. She added, as an employer, the district must have a defensible pay strategy that uses the same philosophy and mindfulness across employee groups.

Mr. Beaver asked if the current or proposed CBA has been used in the market analysis for teachers. Ms. Collette answered the new, tentative agreement had been used since it was set for approval early March. Mr. McEwen asked for the number of days in the teachers' CBA. Ms. Collette answered 187 days at seven hours a day.

Mr. Beaver asked if overtime was paid for the crafts groups. Ms. Collette answered it was, adding there was a distinction between on-call and overtime pay.

Mr. Beaver asked if the sub pay was comparable. Ms. Collette answered Helena was not competitive with Montana City or East Helena, adding sub pay would need to be addressed to remain competitive. She added it was particularly hard to find substitute secretaries and substitute custodians.

Mr. McEwen asked if an increase to administrators' salary required board approval. Ms. Collette responded that traditionally the board did not approve an administrators' salary matrix. She added the board should be concerned with equity of pay methodology regardless of the situation. She

continued she was looking for confirmation of the results from the pay methodology and market analysis.

Mr. McEwen expressed interest in comparing principal salaries with those within the East Helena district.

Ms. Sullivan noted the importance of growing the district's own leadership – examining what enticed teachers to advance to an administrative role. She added there was less incentive if employees had to take a pay cut to advance since is also affected their retirement.

Ms. Sullivan asked for next steps for the committee and if they included assessing ways to adjust the pay scale for administrators. Ms. Collette answered her approach was to provide an overview and have a general discussion before talking in March about specifics to remedy the situation. Dr. Ream added an annual competitive market analysis was good practice.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. McEwen confirmed that next month's Budget & Finance Committee meeting would include the second part of the market analysis presentation.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McEwen adjourned the meeting at 1:09pm.