



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

May Butler Campus and via Microsoft Teams

Monday, October 4th, 2021 – 12:00 pm

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Trustees: Others:

Siobhan Hathhorn, Committee Chair
Libby Goldes, Committee Member
Terry Beaver, Committee Member

Rex Wultz, Superintendent
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Rob Brewer, Maintenance Manager
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Neal Murray, Custodial Services Director
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Shane Swandall, Hulteng Representative
Rich Whitney, Hulteng Representative
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Karen Ogden, Communications Office

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chairperson, Siobhan Hathhorn, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Minutes from the 09.15.21 committee meeting were reviewed and approved after correcting a spacing error under the Board Comment section, paragraph one, line three.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. May Butler Center

The committee discussed that it is not the boards' desire to get rid of an asset such as selling May Butler Center, until we have a Facilities Master Plan. Housing is difficult right now for teachers, so the committee also discussed the idea of May Butler Center possibly becoming an apartment complex that could potentially support staff in a short-term option for housing. The committee discussed bringing in an architect to do a preliminary walkthrough to get an idea if this is a feasible concept to turn the building into an apartment complex. If our goal is to not get rid of assets, then what can this building do for the district and this staff. Slate Architecture Company will be coming in this week to look at the building to let us know what the building could be best suited for. If an architect looked at the building and said here are options for residential and here are options for commercial, we would then need to look at how much money would be needed for each alternative. Then we would sit down as a committee and recommend which direction we wanted to take, and what is best for our dollar and the return investment on it.

The committee discussed if they thought the high demand for rentals would continue, or eventually decline. It was then discussed that a housing shortage is projected for the next six to eight years, and at the rate we are going we are short about 240-280 houses per year. The committee also discussed the possibility of bringing in a property management company if May Butler Center were to be turned into a rental property. Another option discussed was moving PAL into May Butler Center. If we are going to investigate leasing or renting, we may have a great opportunity to be more fiscally efficient if we were to rent out the Front Street Learning Center. The committee decided they could get a list of advantages and disadvantages for moving to MBC from the PAL staff.

B. Deferred Maintenance Plan

Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director, commented that she would look over the proposals with Rob Brewer, Maintenance Manager, along with the Hulteng representatives; and would then report back to the committee. The committee discussed that they are looking at the deferred maintenance plan for our facilities plan but also for the bond. We need to know what things need to be improved before we run that. It was also mentioned that a few other items have come up that need to be included in the maintenance plan such as grounds work, playgrounds, grass, bushes, sidewalks, fencing, asphalt, trees, and the overall exterior pieces that make our campuses robust, secure, and feasible.

Hulteng is giving the committee a proposal of what it would cost to round up the contractors for the electrical piece, the structural piece, and to do the assessment of every building. The latest data that we have is from 2013, and we have made so many changes to that data. It is not necessarily accurate enough for us to add what we have done from a construction perspective and to say this is what we need going forward. The only current data that we have is from our annual roofing assessment. We don't have an annual assessment for items such as an updated code for electrical, water components, or any of those other structural components. This is largely why we would need to contract with Hulteng so they could get those contractors in to do those assessments for each of our buildings and sites.

The committee discussed the deadline to get this information, in order to run the levy, would be needed by mid-December. Hulteng said if we decided to go with them this week, their goal would be to give us this information by the end of the year. The committee discussed that this will not need to be authorized by the board if the proposal comes in under \$80,000 as it would be categorized as an operational expense. It would take the district much longer to create this kind of report internally, and the district does not have masters in every field.

C. Facilities Master Plan

Committee Chair, Siobhan Hathhorn commented. If we approve the deferred maintenance plan, we will have a head start with the facilities master plan because we would know the state of the buildings. We still have some areas that need to be addressed, and that data needs to be collected on. We need to get ahold of our most recent demographic study and see what that tells us about our population and whether we are expecting growth or decline. I would also like to see the current enrollment data. Not just for how many kids are in each school, but also how many kids are going to the school within their boundary. I would like this to be on the agenda every month so we do not lose sight of it and can move forward with getting this complete.

The committee discussed if we have any tie to curricular development interests or needs so we can start looking at what kinds of opportunities we may need to seek in order to provide the accurate space for educational needs. It was discussed at the last meeting that we could hire an educational consultant, but possibly local input might be more what we are looking at. Such as working with the Teaching and Learning Committee or having a district wide community input.

Committee Member Libby Goldes commented. It would be good to utilize our survey company regarding facilities and a long-term plan to get the public's input as well as teachers and students. Also, we should incorporate the purchase of land in any bond we put forward. We could always sell it later if we did not need it. I think that is something that needs to be seriously considered.

Committee Terry Beaver commented. I think in the master plan we must consider the demolition of the old building at Warren and 7th Avenue Gym.

The committee then discussed what could 7th Avenue Gym be used for, and at what cost; or if it would be best to tear it down and use the space for parking. It was also brought up that the building at Warren and 7th Avenue Gym currently house district furniture. That furniture would need somewhere to go if the two buildings were torn down. There is also district equipment that sits out in the weather because we do not have a modern facility with forklift access to store these items. The committee discussed the need in the future for this type of storage facility and mentioned what other double A districts are doing for storage. It was discussed that an inventory management system should be created for evaluating and moving out district furniture from the storage facilities, as well as performing an assessment.

It was also discussed that we are still currently heating 7th Avenue Gym because of the plumbing inside the building. The possibility of draining the building so that it would no

longer need to be heated was discussed, as well as the problems that could occur by turning off the heat in an old building if we ever decided we wanted to turn the heat back on.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Beaver commented. I would like to know the square footage of these buildings, May Butler Center, Front Street Center, and Lincoln. Ms. Collette commented that there is a report with specifics that we share with the committee.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. I appreciate this discussion and I have learned a lot today. Thank you all for being there today. I'm really excited about the deferred maintenance report, and I think it is a huge first step. The idea behind it, I think, is critical. I hope we can also think about not necessarily what needs to be done in the near term, especially with our elementary and middle school facilities; but possibly what we could do to make them better learning spaces going forward in the next 10,20, and 30 years as well. I'm excited about the Facilities Master Plan. This board has determined to compel the district to create one and to compel the board to review it once a year. I think that is a very good thing to do, but I will offer that it makes perfect sense to me that we need to work with a third-party partner to produce the deferred maintenance report. But I would say if that were true, I think we will need a partner to create a full facilities master plan as well. I wasn't around last time when we did it in 2013 when we hired Mosaic to do that. I know that there were some issues with that process, but as a document it was very good. It talks about not only all the things that have been discussed today but also our facilities, what they look like, what maintenance issues they have, but also enrollment, attendance areas, and how many people are going between attendance zones, it includes all of that. Even if you take the recommendations out of it, which are of course very outdated, as a document I think it is a great format. I would suggest that you spend some time with that and let's think about maybe who can help us put that together.

Mr. Beaver commented. We need to address the problem in the dressing room and shower room for visiting football teams at Helena Middle School. It is horrible. I don't know that you can remodel it, or what we would do with it.

Ms. Hathhorn commented. From my perspective, it is important that we have an overarching plan and that we are not putting out fires in certain areas that may or may not be financially responsible in the long term. We do not want to fix a building and then decide we want to replace it. That is why I feel very committed to getting a plan in place so that the decisions that we make come from the plan, and we can go back to the plan every year and have a better format for making facilities decisions.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

