



*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

Lincoln Campus and via Microsoft Teams  
Monday, December 13th, 2021 – 12:00 pm

# MINUTES

### ATTENDEES

*Trustees: Others:*

Siobhan Hathorn, Committee Chair	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Terry Beaver, Committee Member	Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Libby Goldes, Committee Member	Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
	Stacy Collette, Human Resources Director
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
	Rob Brewer, Maintenance Manager
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Rich Whitney, Hulteng Representative
	Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
	Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
	Carley Smith, Guest of the Public
	Klint Fisher, Guest of the Public

### I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chairperson, Siobhan Hathorn, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

### 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 11.01.21 committee meeting were reviewed and approved.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Update on Deferred Maintenance Plan-Discuss Progress and Timeline**

Rich Whitney, Hulteng Representative, commented regarding the contractors that are being used for the project for mechanical and plumbing, windows and architectural components, and electrical and fire alarm assessments. Mr. Whitney also mentioned that the plan would be broken down by high priorities, medium priorities, and low priorities. Mr. Whitney said that he and his team will continue working with Mr. Brewer to fully understand not just what they see walking through but will also take into consideration how the systems service and function for the students. Mr. Whitney said he really wants to be done with the plan in December, but it could be the first week in January. The end product will be an interactive Word document with every school on it and will be supported with an Excel spreadsheet that will have costs for each of the deficiencies and systems that they look at. Mr. Whitney commented that he hoped to have a rough draft of the plan to present to the committee at the January 14<sup>th</sup>, Facilities and Maintenance Committee Meeting. The committee discussed that they would review the rough draft at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting and schedule a future time to meet with the contractors and ask questions. Superintendent Wertz said he would like to have the committee see the report before January 14<sup>th</sup>, so they could ask questions about the report at that meeting. The committee discussed that they would like to see an executive summary displaying the low, medium, and high priorities. The form will be set up so that you can update it annually, or for example, if you have a storm go through and it changes the circumstances of the school, you can change your low priority to a high priority. You can go through there and edit it and adjust it for inflation. It can be used as a working document.

##### **B. May Butler Center Update**

The committee moved on to discuss the update on the May Butler Center building. The committee discussed that there may be a need for surveillance up in that area so we can keep an eye on any graffiti or things of that nature. Slate Architecture walked through May Butler Center with the idea of the building being used for business and or residential. Superintendent Wertz mentioned that we lost a couple of teachers that we could have offered contracts to, but they couldn't find suitable housing. Great Falls School District bought a six-plex across the street from one of their buildings and other districts are suffering from the same effect we are and that's lack of housing. The committee looked at three examples for May Butler building provided by Slate Architecture. Option one is to use or lease the space as a business occupancy, option two is first floor dwelling units and keep the basement as a business occupancy, and option three would be to renovate the entire building as living units. The committee reviewed the cost of what each option would be for renovation. The committee also mentioned the possibility of using the building for mental health services if that program would be created in the District. The committee also discussed that it might be better for the District to focus its energies on acquiring property

that was ready to go as opposed to having to remodel and update May Butler, or to consider a trade. Jane Shawn, HEA President, commented that she could discuss this topic with her Rep Council and see what the feeling is about it. She mentioned that we are talking about six teachers out of six hundred, but it's something. The committee discussed that if it is housing for only six, is it worth the energy and money that would be put into it? Will it help teachers and help the District maintain high quality teachers? The committee asked how Great Falls or other Districts decide who gets their housing? Is it geared towards new teachers to the District? The committee discussed that they would reach out to Great Falls District to see what they are doing with housing and if they utilize a property manager, and what they are doing in relationship to policies and residential living. The committee also discussed the need for Sodexo to be at a different location, and that May Butler building could be a possibility. The committee discussed the decision of what to do with May Butler could be tied into the Facilities Master Plan, and this conversation would continue at future meetings.

### **C. Levy Discussion-Discuss Preparation from a Facilities Perspective**

The committee then discussed the levy and what preparation is needed from a facilities perspective. The committee discussed that it is important to figure out the dollar amount and get that information to the public, and that is where the Facilities Master Plan will come into play. It will tell us what is slated for the next however many years, how much we need each year, and that is going to determine what you should ask for in the levy. The current levy expires in June of 2024. The committee discussed that in addition to what will be on the Deferred Maintenance Plan, there might be some emergency things that come up that need to be taken into consideration. They also mentioned adding educational flexibility for our buildings, such as some kind of construction project that improves the educational integrity of our buildings.

The committee discussed that it is critical to look at the balance between the general fund operational levy and the building reserve. Do we want them to oppose one another on the same ballot? Terry Beaver, Trustee, commented that it is essential to pass the general fund levy this spring as those monies perpetuate forever, and if we lose them, we have lost them forever, and there is no way to make them up. The committee discussed that you could run a bond at any time but must get the county's permission to run it at any time. So, we have been trying to run all elections on the regular election day because its expensive to have the county run it twice. There are elections coming up in May and November.

The committee also discussed the technology levy. It does not expire it is perpetual. Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology, commented that he would like to keep the technology levy on the radar. It is permanent at the moment, but the amount that we are currently spending on technology exceeds what the levy has so we are going to hit a point where that is going to be more of a challenge.

#### **D. Facilities Master Plan Work Session-Review Notes**

The committee then moved on to review the notes from the Facilities Master Plan Work Session. The committee mentioned that it might be helpful to hear what other Districts are doing for mental health spaces. Do they have it in a school or in a separate facility? Is there a benefit to having it be separate? If we are doing what is best for kids, what is recommended? How would something like that be funded?

#### **E. RFQ Discussion**

The committee reviewed the final agenda item which is RFG discussion. It is the request for qualifications for our Facilities Master Plan. The committee discussed what information is needed to prepare for that. The committee also asked if they we're in agreement that they want to move forward with having an outside consultant to create the Facilities Master Plan. The committee mentioned that they would like to hear an informed, educational voice early in the process, as well as local input and potentially regional input to see what has worked in other places. The committee asked where do they place this request so that people we want to hear from will see it and respond? Would it be via publications and online sites? If we go for a request for qualifications and what we want this to look like, we want to make sure we exercise the right that we have people that are in our community, both external and internal stakeholders that have some mechanism for voice. The committee discussed that the buildings are so vastly different, so we need to hear from we need to hear from a variety of educators.

The committee discussed that for the RFQ, they are looking for a facilitator who has an understanding in education who can guide us through the process in looking at the functionality of our existing buildings, listen to our staff, listen to our community, and then kind of culminate that together on what we see. They also discussed that they should primarily look locally, but also see how master plans are working in other areas. The committee discussed what needs to happen before they put out an RFQ. They could potentially create an RFQ letter, decide where to advertise the RFQ, and the language of expectation and the timeline. The committee will look at where they advertised in the past. After that, there could potentially be an interview process with those who responded to the RFQ and then we would make our selection based on criteria that we found that we would prioritize-their focus on educational voice, their timeliness, their recommendations, or references from other districts that they worked with, and then any other criteria that you want to prioritize. If we put all those together, then we can make that decision from those interviews and then we can bring them on board and get started.

Superintendent Weltz commented that he would like to utilize the Friday messaging to keep people informed of where we are in this process when we get to that point. The committee discussed if this is something the Board must approve, we will be asking for general public comment at that time. When we hire the consultant, we would expect that they would come up with a schedule of events and how we engage our teachers, our other staff, consultants, people that we've worked with our construction staff, etc. But then also in part of that schedule would be the public engagement piece as well. That would be one of the decision factors of how they do engage the public. Is it through two or three work sessions that the public is invited to? Will we have open houses and surveys?

The committee discussed what was successful in passing the last bond, and the importance of seeing the Deferred Maintenance Plan, as well as going to buildings and speaking with staff to get their input.

#### **VI. BOARD COMMENT**

There were no further comments.

#### **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.