



Superintendent

Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Special Board Meeting

Lincoln Center-1325 Poplar St.-Helena, MT 59601

May 17th, 2022

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Luke Muszkiewicz-Board Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn-Vice Chair
Janet Armstrong-Trustee
Terry Beaver-Trustee
Janet Armstrong-Trustee
Jennifer McKee-Trustee
Jennifer Walsh-Trustee
Kay Satre-Incoming Trustee

Rex Weltz-Superintendent
Josh McKay-Assistant Superintendent 6-12
Brian Cummings-Assistant Superintendent K-5
Janelle Mickelson-Business Manager & District Clerk
Barb Ridgway-Chief of Staff
Gary Myers-Director of Educational Technology

Katrina Chaney- Lewis and Clark County Superintendent
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District staff

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Lincoln Center Board of Trustees Conference Room and started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA:

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz discussed that incoming Trustee Lois Fitzpatrick had an unforeseen circumstance arise and she would not be able to attend today's meeting and would not be able to be sworn in at this meeting. The oath of office does not need to happen during a public meeting so we can work with her on scheduling a time to make sure that is done. The agenda was then reviewed by those present, and no additional changes were made.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Courtney McAdams commented. "I am a parent of two and a taxpayer in the District. Good evening to the Chair, the Board and the new Board member. It's been great to focus on the success of our talented students and educators in the last few Board meetings. I really enjoyed hearing from the kids and their outstanding teachers and hearing about all the successes that they have been achieving this spring and the past school year. Then I listened to the Board discussion at the last meeting and reflect on the February academic indicator summary, the April budget presentation, and the May discussion on personnel policies. There isn't enough time to address all the issues, questions, and concerns that came up-but I'm still waiting to hear back on a few emails. The lack of transparency and lack of accountability of the school Board to the public is very concerning. I asked for the June-which I just got those-June and July meetings to see when all the new administrative hires, raises, and bonuses were voted on by the Board. I cannot find the votes in the July agenda. I'm still waiting to receive the June agenda. All these positions and raises will cost the taxpayers millions of dollars over the next 10 years when we already have a significant budget shortfall coming. When I talked to your attorney at the May board meeting, she said changing the structure of the administrative team by adding a new Assistant Superintendent or other positions should have been voted on in public at a Board meeting. There were multiple new admin positions added with no public meeting or comments as far as I can tell. She also mentioned the Board had not reviewed contracts or HR policies in the past 12 years since she's been advising the Board. This is stunning to me. First off, that she would admit this to a parent and secondly, that you are operating as a Board with no policy reviews or oversight. I work for a large Fortune 500 company that requires a lot of oversight. I met with my corporate compliance officer yesterday and it was funny because one of the questions he asked me was-are you planning on running for office or school board? I was like, absolutely not, but he said if you do, these are the procedures that you have to go through. He's actually the president of the Board for three municipalities of a large Wisconsin area and has been for the last 10 years. I shared with

him what was happening here, and he was flabbergasted. He made a comment that stuck with me. As a school Board our top three priorities are safety, academics, and the taxpayers. As we will see tonight you do not have a mandate on the school levies. In fact, the high school levy almost failed by 15 votes. Without the support of the community, our schools will not succeed. Fifty percent of the community did not want to authorize more money for the District. That should sound an alarm to all of you. After the last Board meeting, I'm really questioning what the Board's priorities are if you're not reviewing academic performance indicators and Board budget shortfalls-except for once-in the last few years, or key hiring decisions that will cost the taxpayer millions of dollars. I would much rather spend that money on programs and facilities that benefit kids-not more top-heavy administrator costs. We spent \$750,000 on plexiglass on top of all the time and labor spent to install them and then removed them two weeks later. That money could have been used to catch up our kids' learning losses and allow more than 370 K through eighth graders to attend summer school. We have hundreds of kids behind in each grade. We really need a new middle school in the valley and many updates to our facilities to compete in the AA arena. We don't have the money or apparently the support of the community to do so. As you start a new term with new members, I hope you will work together to be forthcoming with the public and taxpayers on what is happening academically, fiscally, and with personnel changes. Thank you for your time and service.”

That concluded General Public Comment. The Board moved on to discuss New Business.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A: Canvass of Elections Results

- 1. Canvas of Election Results and Issue Certificates of Election (Elementary)**
- 2. Canvass of Election Results and Issue Certificates of Election (High School)**

Ms. Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager and District Clerk, commented. “The annual regular school election was held on Tuesday, May 3rd, 2022. Pursuant to 20-20-415, MCA, at the first regular or special meeting after receiving the certified tally sheets and no later than 25 days after the election, trustees must canvass the election results. We received the election results from the county on May 11th, 2022, so we are within that timeframe. In the case of a trustee election, the certificate must be issued to the elected trustee and to the county superintendent, designating the term of the trustee position. In the case of an election on a proposition, the trustees must issue a certificate specifying the outcome of the election.” Ms. Mickelson shared highlights from the election.

- Total registered voters in the elementary were 39,804. Total ballots issued were 34,108. Total ballots tabulated in the elementary were 15,324 with a total voter turnout of 39.21%.
- Total registered voters in the high school were 41,153. Total ballots issued were 35,990. Total ballots tabulated were 16,055 with a total voter turnout of 39.01%.

The election results were also provided by the county elections office on May 11th, 2022. Ms. Mickelson shared the highlights.

- Kay Satre, Siobhan Hathhorn, and Lois Fitzpatrick received the most votes for the three vacant K-12 seats with Kay Satre receiving 8,098 votes (21.71%), Siobhan Hathhorn receiving 7,364 votes (19.74%), and Lois Fitzpatrick receiving 4,931 votes (13.22%).
- The elementary general fund levy proposition passed with a margin of 52.18%.
- The high school general fund levy proposition passed with a margin of 50.05%.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. “I would entertain a motion to Canvass the Election Results and Issue Certificates of Election for the Elementary District.”

Motion: Board Vice Chair Siobhan Hathhorn moved to accept the canvassed election results for the elementary district. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. “I would entertain a motion to Canvass the Election Results and Issue Certificates of Election for the High School District.”

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to accept the canvassed election results for the high school district. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

B: Oath of Office for 2022-2023 Elected Trustees

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz called upon Ms. Kay Satre and Ms. Siobhan Hathhorn to be sworn in by Ms. Katrina Chaney, Lewis and Clark County Superintendent.

Ms. Satre and Ms. Hathhorn recited their Oath of Office and were sworn in by Ms. Katrina Chaney.

C. Organization of the Board of Trustees

- 1. Appointment of Board Chair**
- 2. Appointment of Board Vice Chair**
- 3. Appointment of District Clerk**

1. Appointment of Board Chair

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. “I’ve asked Trustee Walsh to survey our Trustees and see what interest there was for these two very important leadership positions. Trustee Walsh, do you have a motion for our consideration for Board Chair?”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer Walsh moved to appoint Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn as Board Chair. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.
Public Comment: None.
Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. Appointment of Board Vice Chair

Motion: Trustee Jennifer Walsh moved to appoint Trustee Jennifer McKee as Board Vice Chair. Trustee Terry Beaver seconded the motion.
Public Comment: None.
Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. Appointment of District Clerk

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “Does anyone have a motion for our consideration of District Clerk?”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer Walsh moved to appoint Janelle Mickelson as District Clerk. Trustee Luke Muszkiewicz seconded the motion.
Public Comment: None.
Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously.

V. BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented. “I wanted to acknowledge the enormous contributions of our past Chair, Mr. Muszkiewicz. It has been a remarkable two years for every human being, and there wasn't a clear path forward through the last two years and I was very thankful for your leadership in so many ways. Thank you very much.”

Superintendent Rex Weltz commented. “Mr. Muszkiewicz, we value your stability through the times that we have gone through, and the consistency that you have brought to this Board. Thank you for your leadership and your service.”

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “Thank you so much for your service, Luke. I am very honored to be selected by my fellow Trustees to be the Chair. I am really excited to get to work and address some of the really important issues that are coming forward. We have a strong Board with some strong experience and then some new folks coming on with new energy and new ideas, and I think it will be a really great mix to make a productive Board.” Board Chair Hathhorn discussed some of the areas she would be focusing on would be academic achievement, the budget, and facilities. Ms. Hathhorn commented. “As Chair, I'm looking forward to serving with diligence, energy, and transparency. I think that we really need to look at our District as a whole because every child is important, and every family is important. We have a great community in the city of Helena and the Helena Valley who has a history of supporting our educational community. We have talented educators who are motivated to do what's right for kids.

I'm excited to watch great things unfold. Thank you very much.”

Trustee Jennifer McKee commented. I'm heading into my third year, and I've learned so much more about Helena Public Schools. You think you know what school means when you send your kids into one, when you volunteer in one, and when you love one. But when you get involved in the Board itself, especially as chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the most important thing I've learned was the level of detail, expertise, training, intent, care, and love that goes into our schools. I was so impressed with the way our District innovated through COVID. We could have plotted along and that would have been utterly forgivable, but our schools didn't. I am very excited to work with Siobhan, the Board, the community, the educators, and the students to keep pushing in the right direction.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The board meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date