



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

Friday, May 13th, 2022 – 12:00pm

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Committee Members:

John McEwen, Committee Chair
Terry Beaver, Committee Member
Janet Armstrong, Committee Member

Others:

Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator
Kaitlyn Hess, HSD TOSA
Janelle Mickelson, Business Services
Administrator & District Clerk
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Education Technology Director
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Jonna Schwartz, Instructional Coach
Karen Odgen, Communications Officer
Lona Carter, Jefferson Principal
Paul Phillips, Teacher

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair, John McEwen, called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

II. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were offered.

III. **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The committee reviewed and approved the 03.11.22 Budget and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

V. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

A. Budget to Actual Reports

Mrs. Janelle Mickelson, Business Services Administrator and District Clerk, reviewed the budget to actual reports for the elementary with the committee. As of April 30th, there was about 3.5 percent remaining in the Elementary General Fund, but that amount has significantly decreased so we may have to pay for some Curriculum and Technology out of a different fund. A portion of the C.R. Anderson lighting project, and playground equipment also came out of the Elementary General Fund. Mrs. Mickelson said the amount spent for guest teachers was higher than usual. The committee discussed the possibility of why the amount spent for guest teachers was higher than in the past, and they discussed that it could be because of COVID, and because more people are staying home when they feel sick, rather than trying to come into work.

The committee moved on to discuss the budget to actual reports for the high school. Mrs. Mickelson said she had no concerns with the high school budget at this point. The committee discussed that if there is any money left over it could be transferred to the interlocal fund to help us out in the future. The committee also discussed that some of the funding for Camp Ascension is coming from ESSER funds, and some is provided through grant money. The committee discussed how many children would be attending Camp Ascension this summer, and they also discussed the credit recovery program in the high schools, crafts benefits, and rentals. Mrs. Mickelson discussed that most of the rental budget was used for ACT testing including the facility, chairs, and tables. The District also rents items such as postage machines and water coolers.

B. Budget Discussion

The committee discussed the Helena School District's budget. The committee agreed that now is the time to start thinking of ways to address the budget deficit. The committee discussed that a good starting point would be to look at what is required for accreditation, and also look individually at everything that is not required and how much it is costing the District. The committee acknowledged that fixing the

deficit is going to take time and careful consideration. The committee also mentioned that it would be beneficial to look at what other AA Districts are doing and what it is costing them. The committee discussed that we must look at what we added as additional resources to get us through the pandemic and see what can come back out of that, but that the social-emotional and wellbeing of students is extremely important. Superintendent Wertz commented, "I want to provide everything we possibly can for kids. That is who we are, and that is what our staff does. It is in our hearts, and it is not our job, it is our lifestyle."

The committee discussed the importance of partnering with our community and seeing if there are outreaches we can use that we may not be able to do in the District. The committee acknowledged that salaries are our biggest expenditure, and they also discussed that the need for technology is greater than ever before. Technology is used for when a student purchases a lunch, it is used for our safety and security systems, for our virtual and hybrid meetings, and so much more. A technology levy would help enhance our technology and would also support the people that are providing the support to that technology. A technology levy would be beneficial because technology is currently impacting the general fund by about two million dollars. The committee agreed that it is important to find other ways to fund things, such as grants, and stressed that communication between the District and the community is crucial.

In closing, the committee discussed healthcare. The District contributes about \$10,000 a year for each employee. The committee discussed what that amount might look like in the future, and how to address high-cost claims. The committee also discussed transportation costs, transportation negotiations, and what transportation will look like in the fall.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

Trustee Janet Armstrong commented that she is looking forward to seeing what the requirements are for accreditation.

Superintendent Wertz discussed the bond money that is coming up for termination next year and mentioned that we are looking at how much money we have left, when it needs to be spent, what the bond language says, did everything get completed, and whether we owe Hulteng any additional money for their services.

Trustee Terry Beaver said he would like to know when the next possible vote is concerning our levies for building reserve and technology.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McEwen adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m.