



Superintendent

Rex Wertz
324-2001

Business Manager

Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
And on TEAMS

Thursday, July 27th, 2023
10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Kay Satre, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee

Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Tim McMahan, Activities Director
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Administrator
Pam Hemminger, Secretary
Kelly Connolly, Instructional Coach
Melissa Romano-Lehman, Instructional Coach
Michele Douglass, National Math Consultant
Adam Clinch, Teacher

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda and Trustee Terry Beaver requested a Board discussion regarding the Personnel Actions and the Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements for Helena Students Attending Other Districts under Consent Action Items. The Trustees agreed they would discuss these two topics after they reviewed the Consent Action Items.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the consent action items.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Students Attending Other Districts)
5. Resolution to Dispose of Sewing Machines
6. MTSBA FY25 Dues Revenue Estimate
7. MTSBA Principles & Guidelines
8. MTSBA Organizational DNA
9. MTSBA's Board of Directors Visionary-Based Advocacy Resolution
10. MTSBA's Board of Directors Gap Analysis Resolution
11. MTSBA's Officer Elections
 - Sue Corrigan-MTSBA President Elect
 - Krystal Zentner-MTSBA Vice-President

The Trustees reviewed and discussed the personnel actions and had a robust discussion about Helena students attending other districts.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve our Consent Action Items."

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

That concluded the Consent Action Items. The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Items for Action.

B. Items for Action

1. Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement* action item to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Pursuant to MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties.

The Helena School District and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 233 reached a tentative agreement on June 21, 2023 for compensation. The Electrician (1 member) unanimously ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on July 12, 2023. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

A summary of the conditions of the contract are noted below. Upon the Board's approval, a final copy of the negotiated agreement will be made available electronically.

- The two (2) year agreement was open for wages only for the fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.
- The District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$969.00 per month/\$11,628.00 per benefit year.
- A two percent (2%) increase of \$.69 per hour to the base wage from \$34.43 to \$35.12 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- A retention bonus of \$500.00 will be paid in December 2023. The retention bonus will be paid as a separate line item on the December 2023 payroll.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$1,956 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Electricians have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history.
- This agreement brings parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on facilities projects.
- This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve and ratify the collective bargaining agreement as agreed upon between HPS and Electricians.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. "I would entertain a motion for the Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented."

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve the Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement* action item to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Pursuant MCA 39-31-306, an agreement reached by the public employer and the exclusive representative must be reduced to writing and must be executed by both parties.

The Helena School District and the Southwest Mountain States Regional Council of Carpenters reached a tentative agreement on July 20, 2023. The Carpenters (2 members) unanimously ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on July 21, 2023. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

A summary of the conditions of the contract are noted below. Upon the Board's approval, a final copy will be made available electronically.

- The two (2) year agreement was open for wages only for the fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.
- The District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$969.00 per month/\$11,628.00 per benefit year.
- A two and a half (2.5%) increase of \$.65 per hour to the base wage from \$25.94 to \$26.59 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- A current employee with 25+ years of service with the District will receive an additional \$0.25 per hour effective July 1, 2023 and on July 1, 2024, barring unforeseen circumstances, to align with the longevity schedule.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$3,224.00 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Carpenters have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history.
- This agreement continues to bring parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on facilities projects.
- This agreement supports the directive of the Board to support our staff members and address issues relative to the district budget.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve and ratify the collective bargaining agreement as agreed upon between HPS and Carpenters.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “I would entertain a motion for the Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement.”

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve the Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenters Collective Bargaining Agreement. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. Consider Approval of Multidistrict Agreement to Explore Formation of a Health Insurance Trust

Ms. Janelle Manager, Business Manager and District Clerk, presented the action item *Consider Approval of Multidistrict Agreement to Explore Formation of a Health Insurance Trust* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

The 2023 Montana Legislature enacted House Bill 332, which provides for the creation of a qualifying public school health insurance trust and incentive funding for the Trust if certain requirements are met. One of the requirements for Trust formation is the creation and execution of a multidistrict agreement.

Considerations:

- The Montana AA Districts have a collective interest in exploring the creation of a Trust under the provisions of HB 332, performing initial due diligence on the concept, collaborating on a proposal for the Trust’s structure, and obtaining sufficient information to decide if they wish to participate if a Trust is ultimately formed.
- SB 329 passed by the 2011 Legislature expanded Multidistrict Agreements that encourage cooperation between districts to create flexibility, efficiency, and cost savings. HB 39 from the 2013 session further clarified those agreements and extended their maximum term to three years.
- The proposed Multidistrict Agreement expires on June 30, 2026.
- The Billings Elementary District will serve as the prime agency and establish an interlocal agreement fund for the financial administration of this Agreement.
- An initial investment of \$6,000 will be sent to the prime agency from the Helena School District Interlocal Agreement Fund upon approval of the agreement.
- Per the agreement, Helena School District will be responsible for 12% of the costs incurred under the agreement.

Superintendent recommendation:

Enter into the Multidistrict Agreement as presented.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “I would entertain a motion to approve the action item to Consider Approval of Multidistrict Agreement to Explore Formation of a Health Insurance Trust.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the action item to Consider Approval of Multidistrict Agreement to Explore Formation of a Health Insurance Trust. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 5-0 motion carries unanimously.

That concluded the Items for Action, and the Board of Trustees moved on to Items for Information.

C. Items for Information

1. Activity Fee & Drivers Education Fee Increases

Mr. Tim McMahon, Activities Director, presented the item for information *Activity Fee & Drivers Education Fee Increases* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

The Helena School District High School Activity 284 (Pay to Play) Account is used to provide financial support to all MHSA sanctioned activities. This support is in the form of program specific supply budgets, event workers, facility rental, limited improvement of our current facilities and other operational expenses for the department. This account is also used to cover travel expenses for sports teams advancing to post regular season competitions as well as all travel expenses for our music and drama programs. The account is funded through fees paid by our participants, gate receipts, season ticket sales, tournament reimbursements, advertisement sales, a portion of our facility use fee, and participation costs paid by visiting schools when we host a large event. Currently, all participants for our sports teams, speech and debate programs, dance and cheer pay our activity fees. Our music students and drama students do not pay any activity fees. The Helena School District Activities Account 201 is our general fund account. It is used to pay stipends for all coaches, sponsors and directors of MHSA recognized activities, travel for regular season and MOA officials for all events. Only Drama is supported by activities general fund dollars as a non MHSA activity.

This request to the board has five potential changes from current practice in regards to fee amount, activity ticket pricing, and use of activity department funding for specific programs:

1. To raise the participation fee for all activities at the high school level from the current level of \$50.00 per participant for each activity of participation to \$60.00 per participant for each activity of participation. This increase would bring the Helena Public School closer to the AA state average participant fee of \$70.00.
2. To initiate an activity fee payment by students participating in MHSA recognized Music events (All State Music Festival, District Music Festival and State Solo & Ensemble Festivals). Participants in these events would be required to pay a participation fee of \$60.00 but would not be required to purchase an activity ticket. Music students who do not participate in the listed MHSA recognized events would continue to be exempt from all activity department fees. Expenses for participation and travel to these MHSA events will continue to be paid by the activities department as they have in the past.

3. MHSА does not provide for class AA Drama events, the annual Thespian Festival is not an MHSА event. In Helena, expenses for this trip are paid by the activity department but Drama students are not required to pay an activity fee. I am requesting all students who travel to the Thespian Festival pay the \$60.00 activity fee to help offset some cost as all other recipients of activity funding support do.
4. The cost of an adult all season activity ticket would be increased from \$50.00 to \$60.00. This increase would bring the Helena Public School closer to the AA state average adult all season activity pass of \$69.25.

Considerations:

1. Students participating in MHSА music events have not been required to pay any type of participation fee in the past. A participation fee for these students would be a new fee to help to cover the costs of their participation in MHSА events just as all other students involved in MHSА sanctioned events are asked to pay.
2. Drama Students participating in the Thespian Festival have not been required to pay any type of participation fee in the past. A participation fee for these students would be a new fee to help to cover the costs of their participation in a non-MHSА events since their travel expenses are paid by the activity department.
3. All single game ticket prices will remain stable. These are currently at the AA state average.

Drivers Education Fee Increase Proposal

Rational for Request

The Drivers Education program is required to be self-funding. Budgeting for this program is difficult since only two revenue streams exist and both of those are unpredictable. The first is a fee paid by each student entering the program. The number of students who take drivers education has fluctuated from 386 to 519 in the last three years. The second revenue stream is the amount per student reimbursed by the state of Montana as a direct payment to the district at the end of the fiscal year. That payment has ranged from \$68.00 to \$108.00 per student in the last five years.

Analysis of the 2022-2023 budget year shows that after the estimated State of Montana's reimbursement is posted for the budget year a potential negative cash balance will remain. With anticipated increases in instructor salaries, vehicle rental costs, maintenance of vehicles and gas expected again this year, a low beginning cash balance is a threat to the programs ability to continue to self-fund. This is the first request for an increase in the Traffic Education fee since the summer of 2018.

Fee Increase Request

As the administrator of the program, I am requesting an increase in the fee paid by students when they register for Drivers Education of \$30.00 per student. The program typically averages 425 students yearly. This increase will produce an estimated \$12,750 additional dollars which will help the program to stay self-sufficient in the future. The increase would raise the cost of Drivers Education from the current level of \$305 per student to \$335.

Comparison of Helena Program to other AA Districts

The last available data (spring 2023) shows Helena's student fee is comparative with other districts in the AA except for Great Falls. Great Falls receives general fund support which helps keep their driver education fee lower. When comparing all reporting AA school districts, the average cost to students for enrollment in a Drivers Education program is \$285. If Great Falls (as an outlier) is factored out, the average cost to students is \$313. The majority of AA districts also run self-funded programs with the greatest variable in the overall cost of the program appearing to be the hourly rate paid to their instructors. At least two of the other districts are anticipating requesting fee increases as well.

Mr. McMahon answered any questions the Trustees had, and the Board of Trustees moved on to the Academic Growth District Priority Update.

2. Academic Growth District Priority Update

Ms. Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director, and Ms. Kaitlyn Hess, Data, Assessment, and Federal Programs, presented an Academic Growth District Priority Update to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Michele Douglass, National Math Consultant, was available to answer any questions the Board had regarding academics centered around Math. Ms. Davidson and Ms. Hess reviewed the 2022-2023 Academic Data and reviewed their research on best practices. Ms. Davidson and Ms. Hess concluded their presentation by having a robust discussion around their action plan and goals for the 2023-2024 school year and shared some highlights listed below along with answering any questions the Trustees had.

- Hired a K-5 Math TOSA
- Hired 2 Literacy Grant TOSAs
- Curriculum and Assessment monthly meetings with administrators (2 times a month for K-5)
- Curriculum and Assessment support at monthly SLT meetings in each building
- Overall alignment of systems K-12 for continuity amongst schools and identification of professional development opportunities.

That concluded Items for Information. The Board of Trustees moved on to final board comments.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no board comments.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date