



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

Tuesday, January 9th, 2024
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Siobhan Hathhorn, Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee
Kay Satre, Trustee

Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees
Willia Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees

Rex Wertz, Superintendent
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
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
Joslyn Davidson, Curriculum Director
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs
Lona Carter, Student Health
Many guests of the public as well as Helena School District staff

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda. There was a small error under the consent action items, December 12th Full Board Meeting Minutes. Trustee Kay Satre was not listed as an attendee on the first page; however, she was in attendance and listed throughout the minutes, therefore the December 12th Full Board Meeting Minutes will be revised with Trustee Kay Satre added as an attendee on the first page. Consent Action Item number four, 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes, will now become Item For Action number nine, and when the trustees vote upon that, it will be with the revision mentioned above.

III. RECOGNITIONS

The Board of Trustees recognized the staff listed below.

National Board-Certified Teachers

Congratulations to the following educators in the Helena School District who earned National Board-Certification. Congratulations to Bridget Butler, Ellie Fjeseth, Lauren Mitchell, Laura Ortman, Chelsey Davis, Rachel Heaton, Jamie Hoovestall, Mikayla Nickol, Victor Daniel, Lynn Bubb, Ashley Fish, Nicole Lachapelle, Talor LeBrun, Kristen Clausen, and Jena Marshall. National Board Certification is the gold standard of professional development for teachers, and we are so proud of this group of outstanding educators.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear the Superintendent’s Report from Superintendent Rex Weltz.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Weltz gave his Superintendent Report to the Board of Trustees.

Recognition

- Congratulations to our amazing group of educators we recognized this evening who have earned National Board Certification
- January 2024 School Board Appreciation Month
- Law Enforcement Appreciation Day January 8th, 2024
- Congratulations to Helena Middle School Math Teacher Jennifer Mooney who was named the KMTX Teacher of the Month for November
- Thank you to Lisa Cordingley and the Helena Education Foundation for distributing grants across the district in December to our amazing educators

- Business Office
 - Budget closeout 2022/23 SY
 - Annual Audit Process
- Payroll Office
 - Payroll before winter break

New Business

- Bryant Elementary Program Placement Change
- K-12 Vision Project Strategic Planning Meetings
- Safety and Security Levy/Technology Levy Update Across District-February
- Budget Recommendation Consensus Committee Update
- Negotiations: HSD – HEA Update
- AA Schools Trust Feasibility Meeting
- AA HB 332 Consultant Selection
- HB 332 Montana Health Insurance Summit – Jan 30 & 31
- May Butler Center RFP Update
- Helena School District/SMA Monthly Progress Meetings-Master Facility Planning
- Kindergarten registration opened January 2nd, 2024, for Fall 2024 School Year
- Additional Kinder Sprouts 2023-2024 Implementation Update
- Establish a District Vision Committee
- HSD/HEA/Others
- School Safety Program-STOPit

Outreach/Meetings

- Cabinet & Leadership
- AA Schools Health Trust Meetings
- Board Leadership
- AA Superintendents
- Lewis & Clark Board of Health Meeting
- Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee
- HSD/Carroll College Meetings
- Helena Regional Sports/HSD
- HEA/HSD Meeting
- HEF Board Meeting
- HEF Executive Committee
- Student Leaders Meeting
- TV, Print, Radio Media
- Hometown Helena
- Teacher Advisory Committee - Reschedule
- SMA – Facility Planning

Other

- No School January 15th and January 22nd

Superintendent Weltz asked Ms. Lona Carter, Student Health, to give an update on student health in the district. Ms. Carter discussed district collaboration that has taken place over the past fifteen months including: MHF Implementation Grant, PureView MOU (CHS & PAL), Helena Indian Alliance MOU (CRA & HHS), Carroll College LCSW Intern MOU (HMS), RBHI Grant/MOU (6th-12th), Montana Cares App Grant/MOU (K-12), Stronger Together Grant (K-8 MTSS-B), Myrna Loy Arts for Mental Health Grant (K-12), and PAX Sustainability Grant (K-5). Ms. Carter stated that we are still working on the L&C Suicide Prevention MOU, and we are working with the Helena Education Foundation on some different projects to determine how we might be able to support staff. Ms. Carter shared the community connections and support that she is a part of including: Safer Communities Montana Leadership Team (SMC), L&C Suicide Prevention Coalition, High Tiered Communities of Practice (COP), L&C Behavioral Health Local Advisory Council Meeting (LAC), L&C Mobile Crisis Response Team Coalition (MCRT), L&C Opioid Prevention Workgroup, Community That Cares Key Leader, and MT School-Based Health Advisory Committee. Ms. Carter stated that school safety starts with mental health and displayed the Safe and Supportive School Model which is: Engagement: relationships, respect for diversity, school participation, Safety: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying/cyberbullying, substance use, emergency readiness management, and Environment: physical environment, instructional environment, physical health, mental health, and disciplinary environment. Ms. Carter stated that in the spring of 2023, 6-12th graders shifted to the Rural Behavioral Health Initiative (RBHI) Mental Health Screenings *Linked to Care*, and in the last two years 7100+ students have been screened and 289 students have been linked to care. Ms. Carter reviewed the middle schools autumn 2023 RBHI data: 9% of students reported previous or current suicidality (a drop of 5-9%!), 8% of students report clinically significant depressive symptoms (a drop of 1-4%), and 8% of students report clinically significant anxiety symptoms (a drop of 1-4%). Ms. Carter reviewed the high schools autumn 2023 RBHI data: 4% of students reported previous or current suicidality (a drop of 10-14%!), 7% of students report clinically significant depressive symptoms (a drop of 1-2%), and 6% of students report clinically significant anxiety symptoms (a drop of 1-3%). Ms. Carter moved on to share the elementary schools autumn 2023 BASC-BESS data.

Ms. Carter discussed the Montana Cares App which is a proactive approach to the student mental health crisis. In partnership with Western Montana Professional Learning Collaborate (WMPLC) and STOPit Solutions, the Montana Small Schools Alliance (MSSA) is making available the Montana Cares Help App for its members. It is powered and delivered by STOPit Solutions, supported through a 24/7/365 Help Monitoring Program, it escalates life-threatening or imminent threats immediately, and there is three-year funding for WMPLC via the STOP School Violent Act Grant through June 30, 2025. With the Montana Cares App, we normalize asking for help, we understand that basic needs are fundamental to mental health and wellbeing, we know that suicides are more likely to occur after midnight, and we encourage student connectedness and a culture of helping others. Ms. Lona concluded by showing how the app works and how students can get help via the app and answered any questions the trustees had regarding her presentation.

That concluded the Superintendent's Report portion of the agenda. Superintendent Wertz answered any questions the trustees had about his Superintendent Report. The Trustees moved on to hear general public comment.

V. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Sam King gave general public comment. Mr. King is the parent of a child in the Helena Public Schools and a member of Friends of Neighborhood Schools. Mr. King discussed topics including but not limited to potential school closures in the district, the district's budget deficit, levies the district may be running, and school funding.

Ms. Hanna Warhank gave general public comment. Ms. Warhank is a parent of a child in the Helena Public Schools, is a Helena resident, and is a representative of Friends of Neighborhood Schools. Ms. Warhank discussed topics including but not limited to the district's facilities master plan, the district's budget deficit, and levies the district may be running.

Ms. Moffie Funk gave general public comment. Ms. Funk is a parent of former Helena Public Schools students. Ms. Funk discussed topics including but not limited to the legislature's funding formula for school districts and her appreciation of public comment at the meetings.

Ms. Katie Kelley gave general public comment. Ms. Kelley is a parent of students in the Helena Public Schools and is a representative of Friends of Neighborhood Schools. Ms. Kelley discussed topics including but not limited to potential school closures in the district and wanting the best for students and teachers in the district.

Ms. Gaby Loeza Hidde gave general public comment. Ms. Loeza Hidde is speaking on behalf of herself, and her husband Jordan Hidde and they are parents of a child in the Helena Public Schools. Ms. Loeza Hidde discussed topics including but not limited to potential school closures in the district, and the effects of what other school districts experienced when they closed neighborhood schools.

Mr. Jim Malizia gave general public comment. Mr. Malizia is a Hawthorne parent and a representative of Friends of Neighborhood Schools. Mr. Malizia discussed topics including but not limited to the current state funding mechanism and how it does not provide the funding needed to keep pace with the real world needs of constitutionally required quality education.

That concluded general public comment and the Board of Trustees moved on to review the Consent Action Items.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Items

1. Personnel Actions
2. Warrants
3. Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Non-Resident Students Attending HPS)
4. ~~12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes~~
5. Resolution to Dispose of Personal Property-Technology Equipment

There was a small error under consent action item number four, 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes. Trustee Kay Satre was not listed as an attendee on the first page; however, she was in attendance and listed throughout the minutes, therefore the 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes will be revised with Trustee Kay Satre added as an attendee on the first page. Consent Action Item number four, 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes, will now become Item For Action number nine, and when the trustees vote upon that, it will be with the revision mentioned above.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve our Consent Action Items number one, two, three, and five.”

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoiien moved to approve the Consent Action Items one, two, three, and five as presented. Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 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. Consider Approval of RBLC Lease with St. Peter’s Health

The Board of Trustees reviewed the action item: *Consider Approval of RBLC Lease with St. Peter’s Health*.

Background / Summary of Lease Agreement

The District published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the lease of the Ray Bjork Learning Center in June of 2023 and received four proposals. An analysis of all proposals was conducted and the administrative recommendation to the Board was to initiate the development of a lease with St. Peter’s Health.

Over the past several months HPS staff, SPH staff and their attorneys have worked to negotiate a lease. Key points are below.

Use of Facility: The building and associated property will be used for the operation of a licensed childcare facility.

Lease term: 20 years to terminate in 2044 unless renewed under a revised lease agreement.

Rent: \$22,741.49 per month with annual increases.

Costs: Except as set forth, HPS shall not incur any costs relating to the tenant's operation and maintenance including landscaping and snow plowing.

Improvements: Tenant will make all the improvements identified in Exhibit B and shall pay all costs unless otherwise described in the agreement.

Utilities: Tenant shall pay all costs associated with all utilities.

Surrendering Property: At the conclusion of the lease or upon termination of the lease tenant shall surrender all property to HPS in the same condition as on the commencement date.

Assignment & Subleasing: Tenant shall not transfer, mortgage, encumber, assign or sublease all or any part of the property without HPS's advance written consent.

Required Insurance: Tenant shall maintain the following at all times during the term; liability insurance, Workers' Compensation insurance, general liability insurance, and sexual abuse and molestation coverage.

Optional Insurance: Tenant may also obtain renter's insurance, vandalism insurance, insurance for its own equipment or loss of business insurance as tenant deems appropriate.

Default & Remedies: Events resulting in default are described in detail on page 9 of the lease and include but are limited to; abandonment of property, failure to adequately maintain property, any material violation of laws, rules, ordinances, or regulations, and revocation or termination of license to operate a childcare facility.

Superintendent Weltz answered any questions the Board of Trustees had regarding the proposed lease for RBLC with St. Peter's Health.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the RBLC lease with St. Peter’s Health as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the RBLC lease with St. Peter’s Health as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 7-0 motion carries unanimously. (The RBLC Building is considered an elementary district building, therefore, Trustee Jennifer Walsh abstained from voting as she is a trustee strictly for the high school district.)

2. Call for Annual Election

- a. Elementary Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election
- b. High School Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election

The Board of Trustees reviewed the action item: *Call for Annual Election for the Elementary Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election and the High School Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election*. Ms. Mickelson, Business Manager, and Superintendent Wertz discussed that based on our calculations before, we could not run a general fund operational levy for the high school, however, if our Charter School proposals are approved and we receive those basic entitlements that would increase our budget authority, but we would only receive the base amount and we would have to vote the twenty percent. Ms. Mickelson and Superintendent Wertz recommended to the Board of Trustees to not act on item for action two tonight: *Call for Annual Election for the Elementary Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election and the High School Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election*. They suggested that this action item should come back before the full Board of Trustees in February with the high school resolution to include the general fund operational levy at that time if we are able to include that. The Board of Trustees were in agreement that they would not take action on item for action number two: *Call for Annual Election for the Elementary Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election and the High School Trustee Resolution Calling for the Annual Regular Election*, and that it would come before the full Board of Trustees at the February board meeting.

3. Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, presented for action Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage to the Board of Trustees. This policy has been revised to reflect the requirement under House Bill 338 requiring the use of a certified staff member to provide instruction in American Indian studies if the District receives a Indian Education for All payment. Legal references were also updated to add citation to administrative rules incorporating education related to Native Americans. This policy went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve Policy 2100 Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

4. Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities to the Board of Trustees. This is an existing policy that has seen significant change due to recent court decisions. This policy went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities.”

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve Policy 2103 Religion and Religious Activities as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

5. Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property. This policy has been revised to reflect House Bill 128 which prohibits the use of marijuana products (as well as tobacco products) on district/school property. This policy went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property.”

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve Policy 4015 Conduct on School Property as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

6. Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies. This is an existing policy that went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies.”

Motion: Trustee Jennifer McKee moved to approve Policy 4030 Cooperative Programs with Other Districts and Public Agencies as presented. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

7. Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace. This policy went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace.”

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve Policy 5020 Tobacco Products, Marijuana, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

8. Policy 7060 District Safety

Ms. Ridgway presented for action Policy 7060 District Safety. This policy went before the Policy Committee twice and before the full Board of Trustees for information with no recommended changes to the policy at the full board meeting. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 7060 District Safety.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve Policy 7060 District Safety.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve Policy 7060 District Safety as presented. Trustee Jennifer McKee seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

9. 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes

The Board of Trustees voted upon the amended 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes, which included adding Trustee Kay Satre as an attendee on the first page of the minutes.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the amended 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes.”

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve the amended 12.12.23 Full Board Meeting Minutes. Trustee Jennifer Walsh seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 motion carries unanimously.

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

C. Items for Information

The Board of Trustees took some time to review and discuss A Citizen’s Guide to the Helena School District 2023-2024 Budget document which can be found on the Helena Public Schools Board of Trustees webpage. The Trustees moved on to review the Items for Information.

1. HPSD Student Health Update-Lona Carter, Student Health

Ms. Carter had shared her presentation on Student Health earlier in the board meeting after Superintendent Weltz gave his Superintendent Report.

2. Policy 3010 School Admissions: Entrance, Placement and Transfer

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 3010 School Admissions: Entrance, Placement and Transfer. This policy has been revised to reflect changes in the definition of “exceptional circumstances” under House Bill 946 for students under 5 and over 19. Districts who currently are operating an early kindergarten should also include the criteria for students to be admitted for such program-the board must approve each student

admitted for such program. Ms. Ridgway noted that such programs will change pursuant to House Bill 352 starting July 1, 2024, and changes will be made to this policy after next school year to reflect this change. The language also reflects the requirement from House Bill 396 that a district enroll a home school or nonpublic school student part-time at the request of the parent. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 3010 School Admissions: Entrance, Placement and Transfer.

3. Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination. This policy has been revised to incorporate a cross reference to Policy 5015-Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation Prevention Reporting which addresses retaliation. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 5000 Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination.

4. Policy 5040 Personnel Records

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 5040 Personnel Records. Legal references were updated in this policy to reflect the transfer of evaluation language from an existing rule to a new rule in the accreditation standards in Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 5040 Personnel Records.

5. Policy 5065 Evaluation of Non-Administrative Staff

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 5065 Evaluation of Non-Administrative Staff. This policy had a general update to align with updated model language. The policy was also revised to reflect a new rule adopted in the accreditation standards in Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules regarding the evaluation of certified employees. Ms. Ridgway mentioned that a post Policy Committee meeting change to the language was made at the request of our HEA President Jane Shawn to create some clarification that employees in a position covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be evaluated based on the terms of the applicable agreement, as we have a number of different collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 5065 Evaluation of Non-Administrative Staff.

6. Policy 6020 District Organization: Building Administrators & District Administrators

Ms. Ridgway presented for information to the Board of Trustees Policy 6020 District Organization: Building Administrators & District Administrators. In the policy legal references were updated to reflect the transfer of evaluation language from an existing rule to a new rule in the accreditation standards in Chapter 10.55 of the Montana Administrative Rules. Language was also updated regarding access to the evaluation tool. Ms. Ridgway answered any questions the trustees had regarding Policy 6020 District Organization: Building Administrators & Districts Administrators.

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

D. REPORTS

1. Student Representatives Reports

Ms. Willa Bishop, Helena High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Bishop commented, “This week, freshman and sophomores are taking the iReady test for the second time this year, which will establish benchmarks and assess their growth. Unlike years past, juniors are doing a practice ACT during the testing period to prepare them for the ACT in April. Based on what teachers reported, students were engaged and working hard on the practice ACT, even with certain time limitations. Winter sports are now in full swing across the school, with various basketball games, wrestling invitationals, and swim meets happening each week. Next week is semester test week for the students at Helena High, with tests being taken Wednesday – Friday. This will be followed by a record day for the teachers on the 22nd. Helena High student Lyla Ackerman was honored as the Distinguished Young Woman of Montana, a program that focuses on scholarship, leadership, and talent. Registration will be starting for next year's courses in the coming weeks starting with the class of 2025. The enrollment of the incoming freshmen class will be crucial to understanding how our building can maintain classes and extracurricular activities. Finally, student leadership will be meeting on the 24th of January to discuss the 100th annual Vigilante Parade. After COVID, participation in the parade declined so our goal is to create ways to get students involved and active in the parade, especially as the family of the parade’s founder is planning to attend.”

Ms. Luna Hernandez, Capital High School Student Representative for the Board of Trustees, gave her Student Representative Report. Ms. Hernandez commented, “For our music program, the winter concert season is a wrap, so I'd like to give a shout out to students and music teachers for all their hard work throughout December. The last day of school before the break included the annual holiday assembly and winter formal, so various acts were highlighted at the assembly in the talent show finals, including the staff band who performed YMCA. Winter formal was held at the fairgrounds and over 550 tickets were sold. Ms. Cleveland and Niceness Is Priceless organized the Adoptive Family Project at Capital High School. The project is to help families in need in the Helena community. Students sought donations from various businesses and people around town who generously donated towards Christmas gifts for families who are in need. So, first semester final assessments were due by Wednesday, January 10th to the main office. Teachers are turning in the portion of the final exam, project presentation or essay that is common to their specific course, and the goal is that semester tests are common as this ensures that all students are being held responsible for mastering the same basic standards regardless of their different teachers. This is a goal of the professional learning community process. Capital High School is also hosting the regional National History Day contest, so under the leadership of Lauren Chapman, who runs the chapter of National Honor Society at Capital High, this contest will be held at CHS on Saturday, February 2nd. National History Day is an interdisciplinary research project for students in grades six through 12. History Day teaches students to conduct in-depth research, use primary and secondary sources, read a variety of texts, analyze, and synthesize information, and write and present historical content.”

2. Helena Education Association Report

Ms. Jane Shawn, HEA President, gave the Helena Education Association Report. Ms. Shawn stated that she is looking forward to going back to bargaining, and that the consensus model they are planning to use will be fabulous. There is a tentative agreement with the paraprofessionals on their contract that will be voted on next week, and Ms. Shawn stated they are recommending a yes vote on that contract. Ms. Shawn stated there has been discussion about forming a vision group that would come together to do some long-term planning and she is excited about that and stated it would empower teachers to take more responsibility for what is going on in the district.

3. Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre gave the Facilities and Maintenance Committee Report. Trustee Satre commented, “We had a good Facilities and Maintenance committee meeting yesterday and three main things were discussed. We first had an update from Tim Meldrum with SMA on the facilities master planning process and we’ve heard some about that already today. He indicated that they are on schedule, and that SMA has developed multiple scenarios for elementary, middle, and high school facilities. In Tim Meldrum’s most recent presentation to us on the committee, he talked about multiple funding phases and about how certain projects would or could be sequenced. For instance, if we were to replace Helena Middle School at the Helena High site, then Helena High must be replaced or renovated first. He also noted that the facilities master planning team had met with Todd Verrill and Rob Brewer to talk about deferred maintenance and the key role it will be playing in the master plan. There is another progress meeting that is scheduled for January 17th, and they will be refining and then delivering their final report in the next couple of months, which will be offering all scenarios and that will come to the leadership and to the board for further discussion and deliberation. I just would reiterate; it’s come up already that throughout this whole process, they’ve been developing scenarios and options, and as Superintendent Wertz said earlier there, there have been no decisions made or even finalized recommendations. Lots of scenarios and options have been considered. The second thing is we had a report from Todd Verrill on facilities work over the last 30 days. He always gives us a great rundown of major projects that are happening as well as ongoing custodial work. I think it’s important to take a moment to recognize all the stuff that must go on during the breaks on the part of facilities and maintenance folks. They did winter break deep cleaning, and they replaced filters in all the schools, and did a bunch of things like that. We also heard about safety and security work that’s ongoing and a bunch of that also gets done during winter break. One of the things that happened over winter break was that all the automated emergency alert systems were tested across the district. Finally at our meeting we had a presentation by Todd on deferred maintenance in the district. It was really informative and really useful. He helped us to get a better grasp of the deferred maintenance needs and costs across our district, and he did that by looking at major systems in our buildings like HVAC, building envelopes, electrical, and safety and security. Then he showed us both building by building and across the district, sort of cumulatively what kinds of maintenance needs to be done where and what it would approximately cost. So, his analysis drew from a 2022 facilities report, but it showed that our aging buildings need significant systems upgrades to all the above areas at an estimated cost-based on numbers that are a couple years old—an estimated cost of 64 million. That number doesn’t account for two years of pretty high inflation. HVAC accounts for 35% of deferred maintenance across the district as a

whole and roofing accounts for 20%. His school-by-school analysis highlighted the buildings that need most maintenance and it shows that our two middle schools account for 42% of deferred maintenance in the elementary district and Helena High has the highest share of deferred maintenance in the high school district. He also designated all deferred maintenance items as either high, medium, or low priority, so one big takeaway from Todd's presentation is that 87% of the deferred maintenance in our district falls in the high or medium priority category. Another takeaway for me was this comment, *if we were to rely only on the building reserve fund, it would take 50 years to catch up on our deferred maintenance*, but of course in reality you can never catch up on deferred maintenance because new things keep happening as our buildings keep on aging, and maintenance needs are not static."

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Budget and Finance Committee Report. Trustee Armstrong stated that the Budget and Finance Committee met today and that Business Manager Janelle Mickelson's predictions for the increase in utilities have proven to be pretty accurate. The Budget and Finance Committee discussed the levies and there are no numbers yet for those. There are a lot of things to think about regarding how much we want to ask for and what is viable to ask of the community, but we anticipate we will have those numbers by next month. That will be part of the short-term solution to the current debt deficit, but the vision is more long-term. The Budget Consensus Recommendation Committee did not meet last month; they are meeting tomorrow and then again two weeks later.

5. Policy Committee Report

Trustee Janet Armstrong gave the Policy Committee Report. The Policy Committee reviewed all the policies that were presented to the full board this evening. Trustee Armstrong stated that there are many bills from the legislature that are affecting school operating policies, and the Policy Committee is making good progress going through them.

6. Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Board Vice Chair Jennifer McKee gave the Teaching and Learning Committee Report. Trustee McKee commented, "At the Teaching and Learning Committee we discussed the changing to the testing mechanism. We are dropping the iReady in 11th grade and it will transition over to a pre-ACT test at Capital High and for one year only it's that practice pre-ACT test at Helena High and the difference there is that Helena High is a high poverty school that's part of a literacy grant and there's certain kinds of reporting that has to go back to the grant givers. One of them is the way we do standardized testing and since this is the last year of the grant and it's kind of a cumbersome process of getting an exception or just changing what you've been doing, they made the decision to do a practice pre-ACT test instead of switching over to a whole new different kind of test. Then we talked about the way that the district teaches social studies and science, and it was super cool. When it came to science there was a change in state standards a few years ago, but there was a long period of just memorization, for example, everyone could tell you that mitochondria are the building powerhouse of the cell, but no one really knows what that means. It's just like a phrase that's memorized. And so, our curriculum is switching over to bringing meaning out of science and

the natural world and not just memorizing certain phrases so that you can pick the right thing off a standardized test or out of a list. It's built around standards and the science at the high school level is almost kind of going to the way English is taught where the teachers will pull all of this intelligence and pedagogy together and then present it out and meet all of the standards and get everything done that needs to get done, but they won't necessarily do it by just reading chapters one through fifty out of a book. It's going to come through all their training and all their expertise, and that's how we'll meet all those standards. We also talked about financial literacy, which is a requirement that grew out of the last legislature, and there is talk of bringing back the standardized writing assessment.”

7. Health Benefits Committee Report

Trustee Kay Satre mentioned the Health Benefits Committee did not meet last month but she still would like to give a short report with information provided by Rich Franco, Human Resource Benefits Manager. Trustee Satre commented, “The good news is we finished the year \$64,000 ahead of last year and the end of the plan year was September. We also finished last plan year with about 2.4 million in unreserves, which means that we gained about 1 million from the beginning of the plan year. We had talked about our concern about how low that fund was. Rich still holds that about 3.5 million is a sweet spot for the unreserved fund, but we were at about 1.4 million, we regained about a million, so at the end of the plan year it was around 2.4 million. He also added the bad news, which was at the end of October, the first part of our new plan year, we were down about \$500,000 in our unreserves because of large claims. We're going to have a meeting at the end of the month, but we just keep working on information about that 340B RX program. I mentioned that last time and I know it's a federal program that's offered through St. Peter's Health, and it looks like it could offer significant savings, but the work that's being done now is to crunch some numbers to try to figure out just how much those savings might be. We're also having Alliant do an analysis on unbundling our plans to see what potential premium and benefits would be if we go from two options in our plan to maybe three, and the third one would be a high deductible with a health savings account. We are exploring options to improve benefits and to try and make the plan fiscally solvent and robust.”

8. Montana School Boards Association Report

MTSBA has not met, so there was no Montana School Boards Association Report.

9. Wellness Committee Report

Ms. Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff, gave the Wellness Committee Report. Ms. Ridgway commented, “The Wellness Committee met today, and the Harvest of the Month continues. The feature harvest is lentils and I do want to acknowledge the work of Joan Leik who is the Family and Consumer Science teacher at Helena High, who has taken lead on this program. Joan is retiring and she involved Carroll students and high school students working with elementary students, and Claire Pichette has agreed to step in and take over the program, which is great. The Charlie Cart continues to move through schools. That is a portable kitchen that comes from Helena Food Share, and they try to align with the Harvest of the Month, but it's an opportunity

for kids to learn more about food and then see that food actually transformed into a meal. This young person won the Snack Strong contest by submitting a recipe for fruit and peanut butter dip and as a result, Robert and his team will go over in chef's coats during lunch later this month and will serve a snack and do some other things around food. You'll be happy to know the results are in. There was an option to vote on bison recipes and a lot of people voted and these are the winning recipes. There will be one per month and the first month will be bison tacos. The Future Chef Competition is coming up and recipe submissions from students are due by February 2nd. They will be reviewed and then students who are selected will participate in a competition in early March. We are going to start a discussion about vending machines in the high schools and it's an interesting discussion because those vending machines generate revenue for the high schools and over time, I think things that are in the vending machines have gotten better, but not quite perfect, and so that's next on the agenda. I'd like both student board reps to join us. Then finally, I think we talked a little bit previously about the producer partnership, which is a nonprofit out of Livingston which tries to match ranchers who want to get a 100% tax deduction and donate domestic farm animals such as cows and process it and provide it at no cost. They started with food banks, but they will also provide to schools, so we're exploring the possibility of that with the food service."

10. Parent Council Visit Reports

There were no Parent Council Visit Reports to share.

That concluded the Reports portion of the agenda. The Board of Trustees moved on to review upcoming meetings.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn reviewed upcoming meetings with the Board of Trustees.

- Wednesday, January 10th, Budget Consensus Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, January 23rd, Board Work Session, 11:30 a.m., Jefferson Elementary
- Wednesday, January 31st, Budget Consensus Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, February 6th, Policy Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Wednesday, February 7th, Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Monday, February 12th, Facilities & Maintenance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, February 13th, Executive Committee Meeting, 11:00 a.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, February 13th, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 12:00 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, February 13th, Full Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Lincoln Center
- Tuesday, February 27th, Board Work Session, 3:30 p.m., Warren Elementary

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Superintendent Rex Weltz stated that there have been 80 occurrences with the Handle with Care program, and we have nearly 355 students currently that are classified as homeless or unsheltered. Superintendent Weltz mentioned there is supposed to be some severe arctic weather coming at us on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and he is discussing with other superintendents in neighboring districts what they will decide to do with activities and if the activity buses will run. Superintendent Weltz said at this point they are planning on operating as usual, but the conditions will continue to be monitored by Transportation Director Drew VanFossen and Activities Director Tim McMahon.

There were no further board or superintendent comments.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary

Date