



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 Summer Retreat

Wednesday, July 24th, 2024

Bryant Elementary School

1520 Livingston Avenue Helena, MT 59601

9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Trustees

Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Chair
Jennifer McKee, Vice Chair
Rachel Robison, Trustee
Kay Satre, Trustee
Jeff Hindoien, Trustee
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Linda Cleatus, Trustee

Others

Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Karen Ogden, Communications Officer
Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment & Federal Programs
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
Jim Kerins, CMS Consultants
Caleb Lewis, CMS Consultants

I. CALL TO ORDER/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn reviewed the agenda with the Board of Trustees and there were no suggested changes to the agenda.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

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. Electronic Vote on MTSBA Association Business
4. Acknowledge FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Helena Resident Students Attending Other School Districts)
5. Approval of FY 2024-25 Out-Of-District Attendance Agreements (Nonresident Students Attending Helena School District)
6. 5.21.24 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes
7. 5.24.24 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes
8. 5.30.24 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes
9. 6.4.24 Board of Trustees Work Session Minutes
10. 6.11.24 Board of Trustees Full Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the Consent Action Items as presented.”

Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the Consent Action Items as presented. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

The Board of Trustees moved on to review the Items For Action.

B. Items For Action

1. **Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenter Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026**

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenter Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026* 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 Western States Regional Council of Carpenters reached a tentative agreement on June 26, 2024. The Carpenters (2 members) unanimously ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on June 27, 2024. The District negotiation team recommends ratification.

The two (2) year agreement was open for language and wages for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026. 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 District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,031.90 per month/\$12,382.80 for the 2024-2025 benefit year.
- The District shall provide one additional floating personal day to be used no later than June 15th annually.
- Sick leave donations are to be approved for a qualifying event as defined under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Sick leave donations for a parent, sibling or for purposes of parental leave is limited to a four week maximum.
- A one and a half (1.5%) increase of \$.40 per hour to the base wage from \$26.59 to \$26.99 per hour for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- A cell phone allowance of \$50/month will continue to be paid on a quarterly basis on a separate check.
- A current employee with 25+ years of service with the District will receive an additional \$0.25 per hour effective July 1, 2024 to align with the longevity schedule.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$2,216.92 for the 2024-2025 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, "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Carpenter Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026.*"

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve and ratify the *HPS-Carpenter Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026*. Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

2. **Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Craft Council Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025**

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Craft Council Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025* 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 Craft Council (Plumbers and Pipefitters, Local Union #41 and International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers Local #88) reached a tentative agreement on July 17, 2024 that was ratified by the members. The District negotiation team recommends ratification. The one (1) year agreement was open for wages and language for the fiscal year July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. 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 District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,031.90 per month/\$12,382.80 for the 2024-2025 benefit year.
- The District shall provide two additional floating personal days to be used no later than June 15th annually. One floating personal day will sunset June 2025.
- A one and a half (1.5%) increase to base wages for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. For the plumbers, this would be an increase of \$.56 per hour to the base wage from \$37.44 to \$38.00 per hour. For the mechanic, this would be an increase of \$0.49 per hour to the base wage from \$32.41 to \$32.90 per hour for the 2024-2025

- A cell phone allowance of \$50/month will continue to be paid on a quarterly basis on a separate check.
- An additional clothing allowance of \$200.00 to be paid in July 2025. This benefit will sunset July 30, 2026.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$2,206.50 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Craft Council 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 the Craft Council.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Craft Council Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025.*"

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve and ratify the *HPS-Craft Council Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025*. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

3. Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Custodians and Centralized Maintenance Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *HPS-Custodians and Centralized Maintenance Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025 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 American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Montana Council #9 Local #2774, reached a tentative agreement on June 25, 2024. The members ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on July 18, 2024. The District negotiation team recommends ratification. The two (2) year agreement was open for wages only for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. 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 District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,031.90 per month/\$12,382.80 for the 2024-2025 benefit year.
- The District shall provide one additional floating personal day to be used no later than June 15th annually.
- A one and a half percent (1.5%) increase of \$0.25 to the base wage from \$16.57 to \$16.82 per hour for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$37,261 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Custodians and Centralized Maintenance have a collaborative relationship and productive negotiations history.
- This agreement continues to bring parity to the bargaining units within HSD that work together on maintenance and grounds 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 the Custodians and Centralized Maintenance.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *HPS-Custodians and Centralized Maintenance Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025.*"

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve and ratify the *Custodians and Centralized Maintenance Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2025.*

Trustee Linda Cleatus seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

4. Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026* 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 18, 2024. The Electrician (1 member) ratified the tentative agreement to the contract and notified us on July 8, 2024. The District negotiation team recommends ratification. The two (2) year agreement was open for language and wages for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026. 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 District shall continue to contribute to the employee cafeteria plan an amount of \$1,031.90 per month/\$12,382.80 for the 2024-2025 benefit year.
- The District shall provide two additional floating personal days to be used no later than June 15th annually. One floating personal day will sunset June 2025.
- Employees who have at least eighty (80) hours of accrued vacation as of May 25th, may cash out up to forty (40) hours once per year in the June pay period.
- A one and a half (1.5%) increase of \$.53 per hour to the base wage from \$35.12 to \$35.65 per hour for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- A cell phone allowance of \$50/month will continue to be paid on a quarterly basis on a separate check.
- The total estimated salary cost of this settlement is \$1,115.62 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Considerations:

- HPS and the Electrical Workers 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 Electricians.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, “At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Approval and Ratification of the HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026.*”

Motion: Trustee Jeff Hindoien moved to approve and ratify the *HPS-Electrician Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2026*. Trustee Kay Satre seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

5. **Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2024-2025**

Ms. Keri Mizel, Human Resources Director, presented the action item, *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2024-2025* to the Board of Trustees.

Background:

Attracting and retaining top talent in the current job market is more challenging than ever. Salary is a significant factor for candidates evaluating job offers and for current employees considering their long-term career prospects. To maintain our position as an employer of choice and attract the best candidates, we must align our compensation packages to reflect industry standards. Independent positions (classified positions not represented by a bargaining unit) have not seen a salary increase over the last four years. Investing in competitive salaries is a direct reflection of our commitment to acknowledging and rewarding the valuable contributions of our current employees. A well-compensated workforce is likely to be engaged, motivated, and dedicated to their roles, resulting in increased productivity and higher morale across the organization. Moreover, competitive compensation fosters loyalty and reduces turnover risk, thereby promoting continuity and stability within our workforce.

The total estimated salary cost to the general fund is \$45,000 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Superintendent recommendation:

Approve a 1.5% increase to the salary matrix for independents to remain competitive in the market, enhance recruitment efforts, retain our current talent, and promote equity across all employee groups.

Board Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented, "At this point I would entertain a motion to approve the action item *Approval of a General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2024-2025.*"

Motion: Trustee Linda Cleatus moved to approve a *General Wage Increase to the Independent Salary Matrix for 2024-2025*. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 6-0 motion carries unanimously.

C. Item For Information

1. **Board of Trustees Summer Retreat Discussion**

The Board of Trustees moved on to discuss various topics. The discussion began with a Helena Public Schools Salary Survey Report presented by Jim Kerins and Caleb Lewis with Communication and Management Services (CMS). CMS worked with Helena Public Schools (HPS) leadership to identify benchmark positions for the salary survey. Selected positions provide occupational and hierarchical representation of positions in the district. The survey includes the 7 AA school districts in Montana, and governmental and private employers in the Helena area. Fifteen organizations participated in the study. The study focused on accurate matches and detailed wage and wage range information. CMS reviewed individual responses to ensure quality assurance and quality control. CMS offered a comprehensive report of aggregate findings and offers recommendations for change. CMS reviewed with the Board of Trustees a description of the survey methodology, scope and data sources, a summary of salary survey and market study findings relative to HPS wages, an organizational structure analysis including school district organizational charts, wage and economic trends, and recommendations for HPS's compensation plan. CMS discussed that next steps could include developing a compensation philosophy, revise the wage matrix, develop a classification system, establish an administrative salary schedule, and to conduct salary surveys regularly. Mr. Kerins and Mr. Lewis answered any questions the Board of Trustees had regarding their presentation.

Next, the Board of Trustees reviewed a School Administrators of Montana fall 2024 update given by Dr. Rob Watson, Executive Director for the School

Administrators of Montana. Superintendent Weltz moved on to discuss district strategic priorities with the Board of Trustees including a robust discussion around student achievement, culture, communication, budget, and facilities. Ms. Justine Alberts, Curriculum Director, and Ms. Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programming presented student achievement goals, and a district action plan to the Board of Trustees. The meeting concluded with a robust discussion about the best time to run future levies, the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) program location, and vacant land that the district may be interested in purchasing in the future.

V. BOARD COMMENTS

There were no further board comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Siobhan Hathorn adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary