Superintendent
Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Director
Sam Holman
324-2040

Board of Trustees
Special Board Meeting

Lincoln Center
1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601
and via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, June 2, 2026
12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.
Jennifer Walsh, Chair
Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee
Kay Satre, Vice Chair
Lisa Cordingley, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Keith Meyer, Trustee
Keller Higbee, Trustee
Siobhan Hathhorn, Trustee
Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
Jane Shawn, HEA President
Dr. Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent
Rich Franco, Human Resources Benefits Manager
Shane Swandal, Hulteng CCM, Inc.
Alec Pinero, Hulteng CCM, Inc.
Several HPS Staff Members

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., and the Board participated in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

The Board of Trustees reviewed the agenda, and there were no suggested changes.

The Board of Trustees moved on to hear general public comment.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consent Action Item

1. Personnel Actions

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion for the approval of the consent action item.

Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the consent action item. Trustee Janet Armstrong seconded the motion.
Public Comment: None.
Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

B. Items for Action

1. **Asbestos Abatement Award – Capital High School**
2. **Asbestos Abatement Award – Helena High School**

The Board reviewed recommendations for the Summer 2026 asbestos abatement projects at Capital High School and Helena High School. Mr. Alec Pinero with Hulteng, CCM, Inc. reported that the work will prepare designated areas at both schools for upcoming bond construction activities. Following a competitive bidding process, Environmental Contractors submitted the lowest responsible bid for the Capital High School project in the amount of $205,000, and Safetech submitted the lowest responsible bid for the Helena High School project in the amount of $102,200. Mr. Pinero addressed questions from the Board of Trustees regarding the information presented.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion for item for action 1: *Asbestos Abatement Award – Capital High School.*

B.1. Motion: Trustee Kay Satre moved to approve the Asbestos Abatement Award for Capital High School to Environmental Contractors. Trustee Keith Meyer seconded the

motion.
Public Comment: None.
Vote: 8-0; motion carries unanimously.

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh entertained a motion for item for action 2: *Asbestos Abatement Award – Helena High School.*

B.2. Motion: Trustee Siobhan Hathhorn moved to approve the Asbestos Abatement Award for Helena High School to Safetech. Trustee Janet Armstrong 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

1. Plan Year 2026-2027 Premium Rates

Mr. Rich Franco, Human Resources Benefits Manager, reviewed the proposed 2026–2027 employee health benefit premium rates with the Board of Trustees. He explained the actuarial methodology used to develop the premium projections, including claims experience, credibility weighting, industry trend assumptions, and administrative and stop-loss costs. Mr. Franco reviewed several premium increase scenarios considered by the Health Benefits Committee, noting that the committee evaluated blended medical and pharmacy trend assumptions before recommending a 15.5% premium increase for the 2026–2027 plan year.

Mr. Franco also reviewed the funding projections for the dental and vision plans, noting that current funding levels provide flexibility to help offset a portion of the medical premium increase. He reported that the Health Benefits Committee approved the 15.5% premium recommendation by a 6–4 vote after careful consideration of the long-term financial sustainability of the health plan. He further noted that participation in the Bridged Health Alliance Trust is expected to generate significant savings, reducing what otherwise could have been substantially higher premium increases.

Trustees asked clarifying questions regarding administrative and consulting fees, and Mr. Franco explained that those costs have remained stable due to longstanding vendor partnerships. The Board and administration also discussed the importance of ongoing communication with employees regarding the premium recommendation, including potential informational meetings in the fall. The proposed premium rates will be presented to the Board for consideration and approval at a future Board meeting.

2. Owner's Construction Representative Projects Update

Mr. Shane Swandal, Owner's Representative with Hulteng, CCM, Inc., provided an update on the District's bond construction projects and procurement activities. He reviewed the public bidding process for upcoming project components, explaining that while General Contractor/Construction Manager (GCCM) teams have been selected through a competitive qualifications process, all individual project scopes of work will continue to be publicly procured in accordance with District requirements. Mr. Swandal also reviewed opportunities for contractors to participate in upcoming bid packages through the District's website and the Builders Exchange, noting that bid opportunities and contract awards will remain publicly available. Trustees discussed the importance of providing accessible information to community members regarding bond expenditures and project progress. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Swandal addressed Trustee questions related to the procurement process, public access to bid information, and project communications. Trustees also inquired about the Capital High School kitchen project. Administration confirmed that the existing kitchen will remain fully operational until the new facility is completed, with the new kitchen anticipated to open by August 2027. Administration also noted recent progress with required City approvals and discussed the importance of communicating the construction timeline to the public to address community questions.

V. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

During Board and Superintendent Comments, Superintendent Weltz discussed the District's continued efforts to strengthen data and assessment practices to support student learning and achievement while also meeting increasing state reporting requirements. He noted that additional information regarding the District's teaching and learning priorities and student achievement goals for the 2026–2027 school year will be presented during the July Board meeting as part of Trustee onboarding and strategic planning. Trustees discussed the importance of the newly approved Data and Assessment Administrator position in supporting both state compliance and instructional improvement. Board members also noted that the District's administrative staffing levels remain lean and comparable to similarly sized districts.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Jennifer Walsh adjourned the meeting at 12:59 p.m.

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Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date