



Superintendent
Rex Weltz
324-2001

Business Manager
Janelle Mickelson
324-2040

Board of Trustees Meeting

Capital High School
100 Valley Dr, Helena, MT 59601
And on TEAMS

Tuesday, August 10, 2021
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE – Present unless otherwise noted.

Luke Muszkiewicz, Board Chair
Siobhan Hathhorn, Board Vice Chair
Jennifer Walsh, Trustee
John McEwen, Trustee
Terry Beaver, Trustee
Elizabeth “Libby” Goldes, Trustee
Janet Armstrong, Trustee
Jennifer McKee, Trustee
Rylie Schoenfeld, Helena High School Representative
Eliza Lay, Capital High School Representative

Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent
Brian Cummings, Assistant Superintendent
Janelle Mickelson, Business Manager
Barb Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gary Myers, Technology Administrator
Stacy Collette, Human Resources Administrator
Jane Shawn, HEA President

Many guests of the Helena Community

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

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

II. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Rex Weltz recognized Reg Hagerman, a Health and Physical Education Teacher at Capital High. Mr. Hagerman received the David Oberly Striving for Excellence Award from the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE MT). Mr. Weltz went on to recognize the members of his administrative team, as well as our IT and facilities staff. Mr. Weltz recognized our Food Services staff for serving the children of our community over 100,000 meals this summer. That's averaging 15 to 16,000 meals per week. Recognition was also given to the teachers and staff members that participated in the school's summer school program, Camp Asension. Mr. Weltz then shared an overview of his first thirty days as Superintendent, including community outreach that he has done.

Mr. Weltz recognized Ms. Janelle Mickelson, Business Office Administrator. He commented that this was by far the most thorough and detailed budget report he had ever seen. Ms. Mickelson then recognized each member of her team in the Business Office.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

A Central school parent, Zoey Bernard, commented via TEAMS. Ms. Bernard said she is concerned with the safety at the drop off and pick up area at Central. She believes there is no safe location for parents to pick up their children at Central due to traffic concerns.

There was no further public comment.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items for Action

1. Certify the Trustees' Financial Summary-Elementary Fiscal Year 2020-21

Ms. Mickelson explained how ESSER funds were used, and discussed interest revenues, free and reduced numbers, rental income, and technology expenditures. She said she would need to add in the teacher's retirement summary.

Motion: Trustee Libby Goldes moved to approve to Certify the Trustee's Financial Summary-Elementary Fiscal Year 2021-21. Board vice chair Siobhan Hathorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote- 8-0 The motion carried.

2. Certify the Trustees' Financial Summary-High School Fiscal Year 2020-21

Motion: Trustee John McEwen moved to approve to Certify the Trustees' Financial Summary-High School Fiscal Year 2020-21. Trustee Libby Goldes seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 The motion carried.

3. Final Budget Adoption-Elementary Fiscal Year 2021-22

Motion: Trustee Terry Beaver moved to approve the Final Budget Adoption-Elementary Fiscal Year 2021-22. Board vice chair Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 The motion carried.

4. Final Budget Adoption-High School Fiscal Year 2021-22

Motion: Trustee John McEwen moved to approve the Final Budget Adoption-High School Fiscal Year 2021-22. Trustee Terry Beaver seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: 8-0 The motion carried.

5. Policy 1905 Student, Staff, and Community Health and Safety Needs

Chief of Staff Barb Ridgway asked the trustees to consider revisions to Policy 1905 Student, Staff, and Community Health and Safety Needs. The revisions being recommended are noted below.

If the number of active COVID-19 cases in the county increases to the point of being considered a "substantial" or "high" rate of transmission as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Board of Trustees authorizes the Superintendent to implement a requirement for face coverings to be worn in all Elementary District PreK-8 schools and PreK-8 programs. The Superintendent may also consult with local health experts to include but not be limited to: St. Peter's Health, Lewis and Clark Public Health and other local health providers.

In the event it is determined face coverings are required, the Superintendent shall announce the face covering requirement to students, parents, staff, and visitors for the immediate successive school week by 3:00 pm on Friday of the previous week. If the Superintendent determines masks are required, signs will be installed to inform students, parents, staff, and visitors of mask requirements while present in the identified District buildings.

All points of entry to any school building or facility open to the public shall have a clearly visible sign posted stating whether masks are required or recommended.

Motion: Trustee John McEwen moved to approve the revisions to Policy 1905 Student, Staff, and Community Health and Safety Needs. Board vice chair Siobhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: There were many parents that commented publicly as well as online. About 27 parents commented in favor of the motion, and about 26 were against the motion.

Braden Burkholder is a parent of students in the district. Mr. Burkholder commented. I am in favor of keeping teachers and families safe. I am asking you to require masks for all ages regardless of vaccination status. Masks are a safe way to keep our schools open. The policy is

not adequate, it is reactionary. Students won't know if it is mask week or not. What science is this based on when all the guidance refers to universal indoor masking. The easiest solution is masking. Not masking can have a very negative impact on our communities. It is best for our students. Please amend this proposal to help our students stay in school.

Jaimie Bright is a parent of students in our district. Ms. Bright commented. This is a virus that is not going away. Our personal freedoms are gone. When masks were mandated outbreaks still occurred. Please listen, my solution might be the answer for all interests. Make it personal choice. Let users wear masks that protect the user. KN95 masks should be used. Will there be a survey about putting mask mandates in place? This will allow you to see where everyone stands. Parents are stirring and tensions are high. You have proven that you don't listen to the community and parents are angry. We are ready to take action and our kids will remove masks in the schools. Please allow personal freedom.

Dr. Todd Wampler is president of St Peter's Health Medical Group, family medicine physician and parent of a high schooler in Helena. Dr. Wampler commented. Masks are effective in preventing Covid 19 and other respiratory illness. We have seen a spike in respiratory illness since masks have been removed. We are uncertain of the long-term effects of Covid. We are seeing a new strain and the delta strain is far more transmissible. It is crucial we take additional steps. Our hospital has been at capacity for the past several weeks due to Covid. We need to flatten the curve and masks are an important part of that. I support your efforts keeping our schools open by having children wear masks.

Deanna Anderson is a parent of children in the district. Ms. Anderson commented. People have had their opportunity to be vaccinated and wear masks if they choose to. No mandatory mask or vaccine mandate at any time please. I will never approve my child to be tested for Covid 19. I would encourage the schools to focus on teaching and stay out of the healthcare industry. The schools have a lot of making up to do to make up for time that was stolen. Let the healthcare industry focus on testing. We need to reopen without fear.

Alyssa Townsend is a parent of two children in the public school system. Ms. Townsend commented. Thank you for making informed decisions for the kids. I would encourage the high schoolers to wear masks if possible. We should amend the high schoolers to wear masks until we know more about the delta variant.

Dr. Greg Holsman commented. There are benefits in wearing masks. One of our challenges is we are trying to negotiate with a virus. In Florida, Mississippi, and Louisiana some schools had to quarantine. This is a serious disease. It's had an effect on how we respond as a community and tensions run high. Look at the data. I recommended masking be continued until more people are vaccinated.

Monte Tyler commented. I believe that the masks should go away. We have been doing this for over a year. I have not contracted Covid. I'm not going to say masks do or don't work. If you want or do not it is your choice. We shouldn't force people.

Courtney McAdams is a parent of children in the district. Ms. McAdams commented. I am strongly in favor of keeping masks optional and make it their choice. There have been no deaths for 18 months of children in our community. Why are we asking our kids in Helena to wear masks? We have kids grade levels behind in schools now. Kids won't see facial expressions and their breathing patterns will be changed. Can we please get back to focusing on studies?

Amanda Osborne is a parent of three children in the district. Ms. Osborne commented. I do not support mandatory masking in schools. Helena was the only Double A school in Montana that could not get kids into school full time last year. Kids are still not being severely affected by this disease. I do not support vaccines. When will it ever be safe for the kids to take these masks off? Make masks optional.

Tammy Stefanik is a parent and aunt of students in the school district. Ms. Stefanik commented. This is way better than last year. Masking needs to be optional for pre-k through high school. Have you asked why others don't wear them and their reason? There is a division in our schools regarding this issue. We need unity in our school. Half the children were crying in kindergarten because they had a mask. Teachers couldn't get near children and couldn't console them. These kids have learned school is a horrible place to be. House bill 435. Research it.

Kyla Kauffman commented. I think it is important to get kids in school full time. Our job as a community is to protect those who can't be vaccinated. Masks keep us super healthy. Keep our kids in masks until the delta variant goes away.

Tyrel Wilson is a parent of children in the district. Mr. Wilson commented. Wearing a mask will hinder student's learning. Up to 93 percent of communication is nonverbal. We need to get back to normal. Let's not rob our children of their childhood. I caution you about blindly following the CDC guidelines. I ask you to consider the minimal risk this poses to our children. If masks are mandated, we need to consider other options for our children.

Shannon Smith is a mother of three children in the district. Ms. Smith commented. I want to express my concern of this mask mandate and the toll it has taken on my kids. Students have been docked in class for not wearing masks. They are nothing more than a distraction. They are wearing filthy masks. We are no longer sitting back. We are holding all of you accountable. You must dually represent our families.

Pat Sampson is a parent of two grade schoolers in the district. Mr. Sampson commented. I do not support the mask mandate. We watched our kids struggle to find enjoyment in school. They had anxiety, couldn't understand their teachers, didn't like school, and they had to wear masks at recess. No one should be forced to wear a mask. I ask that you look at how our children see the world right now. They spent the whole summer at camps, pools and in normal activities. We may have to redirect our support of the schools.

Dr. Greene is a pediatrician in the Helena community. Dr. Greene commented. The delta variant is much more contagious. We are seeing a resurgence in cases of the unvaccinated. We only have 30% of 12-17 years old that are vaccinated in Montana. We might need 85-90 percent of

vacation to reach protection. Masking protects. We as health care professionals have done this. Masking works and it is my advice we mask in K-12.

Gina Hultin is a parent of a child in the district. Ms. Hultin commented. My child has asthma. We vaccinated our son. We are in the middle of a health crisis; we need to take all the precautions we can. Conversation needs to move away from politics. We need to care about one another. Follow the recommendations of the CDC. Mandate masking this fall until the vaccine is available for kids under 12.

Katja Elias is the spouse of a physician in Helena and a parent in the district. Ms. Elias commented. The delta variant is more dangerous and after losing more than 600,000 people in our country the Covid virus is learning quickly through each transmission. It will continue to learn and change. Wear masks indoors to prevent the highly contagious virus. We want to keep our schools open, and we want to keep people safe in our community. Masking helps prevent transmission.

Greg Wilster is a parent of two children in the district. Mr. Wilster commented. I implore you to decide based on science, not on popular opinion or a vote of the community. Every day we are learning more about this virus that is burning through the country. Waiting until transmission is too high could be too late.

Barbara Calahan commented. I want you to do what is best for our children. We have science going back to the 1800s proving that masking does not stop viruses. You are hurting the children. The science is there to prove you are not doing what is best for children. My child went to a school where masking was not required and went 5 days a week and fared much better. We will have to take the next steps if you won't.

Liam Townsend is a grandfather of two children in the district that he said are 15 and 12 and who are vaccinated. Mr. Townsend commented. There are a lot of kids who are not vaccinated, and cases are increasing. I support you in masking the children.

Melissa Cosena is a parent of children and educator in the neighboring school district. Ms. Cosena commented. Kids can't learn while being masked. We are teaching them to be scared. The school's job is not to keep kids from getting sick, their job is to educate them. All kids are different, and they have lots of issues with wearing masks. This is causing stress and anxiety. I am more worried about their mental health. Kids are not resilient. We do not know what the long-term effects of all this masking and Covid protocols will be. Let it be parent choice.

Sarah Crowley is a mother of two children in the district that she said have asthma and are 10 and 13 years old. Ms. Crowley commented. I support a mask mandate until all kids can be vaccinated. You proved last year masks worked. Please support a mask mandate.

Carrie Jones is a business owner and parent of a kindergartener in the district. Ms. Jones commented. I have different information related to the policy. Look at reputable sources. We are seeing cases from unvaccinated parents to their children, and it is a massive transmission. Only

half our district is vaccinated. Our testing capacity only has a limited amount. They start there in the morning at 4 and are leaving at 11 at night. A surge is expected the second week in September. You will lose your ability to get tests back quickly. I do not think this policy is effective enough.

Beth Gordon commented. I strongly support a mask mandate as a mother of two kids with asthmas. I served as a para for 4 years in Helena. I was also part of the DLI initiative. Kids were resilient. Kindergarteners were able to make it work, and it went very well. We prevented Covid from spreading and regular colds and other illnesses. Until we get everyone vaccinated, we should keep those masks in place.

Dr. Michael McClain is a chiropractor in Helena. Dr. McClain commented. I think if the board is trying to prevent kids from getting sick-that is a slippery slope. I oppose a mask mandate. The board needs to consider all sides.

Heidi Keister commented. My husband and I are fully vaccinated. Send a survey to all parents. Great falls opted out of masking, please make this an option. If we decide on masking lets have the school provide KN95 masks every day. Please let the parents decide about their children's bodies and masking.

Kate Serilo commented. Please allow families the ability to choose what is best for their family. CDC still just recommends. How do you tell parents what is best for their children? I am a mother and I know what is best for my child. Leave the option to each family.

Emery Waits is a father of two boys in elementary school in the district. Mr. Waits commented. Both my kids strongly disagree with having to wear a mask. They are not learning social cues in a school environment. It's like you guys are holding kids' hostage. It is our job to raise our kids, not your job. I am strongly opposed to a mask mandate and my kids will not wear a mask.

Shantel Hosking is a mother of two elementary children in the district. I do support the mask mandate. This is not a decision based on feelings. I support science. I have children who do not get to make that choice.

Stephanie Grosz commented. I am for no masks in schools. It should be parent choice.

Matt Hozee commented. I am for the mask mandate. It should be based on science.

Erik Martini is a father of three children in the school district. Mr. Martini commented. Do you remember two weeks to stop the spread? There are always going to be new variants. Who are you? Who gives you the right to choose healthcare for our children? It is for the parents to decide.

Jennifer Adkins is a mother of two children in the district. Ms. Adkins commented. I worry about my kids. We are so divided; it shouldn't be mandated. It needs to be a personal choice, then there is no division.

Howard DesRosier is a father of two children in the district. Mr. DesRosier commented. How are we going to educate these kids and how are we going to catch these kids back up? Let's compare to a similar demographic. In May when we took the masks away, we were told this is the most contagious virus. The numbers kept going down. The vaccine is not FDA approved. We have had it less than a year and we know no long-term effects. How do we know it's safe? Nothing less than an N95 mask is healthy. I'm tired of this. If you are that worried have your kids go do DLI. Please do not do this. Don't mask our kids.

Jim Weber is a teacher at Capital High School. Mr. Weber commented. I don't claim to be a teacher. I am an expert on children. I have taught in this district for 30 years. I have some kids that I have never seen due to masks. It's about building relationships with children. This masking must stop. It's not okay. It is difficult at best for these kids. Give parents these options. Do what is best for these children. This is damaging the children.

Paisley Smith is a high school student in the district. Ms. Smith commented. Covid has taken away many opportunities like football games and dances. It has given me depression and anxiety. I think masks should be optional. If I get covid that is the risk I take. I want a normal high school experience.

Cynthia Worcester is a mother of three children in the district. Ms. Worcester commented. I am in favor of mask mandate. I have two children who are special needs. They wear their masks. My daughter has anxiety disorder and lung deformity and fears Covid. The science is clear on this topic. Masks help to stop Covid. They must feel safe. I hope the board chooses masks. If my child gets Covid it could be fatal.

Cheryn Metzger is a parent of a child in the district. Ms. Metzger commented. My child did not mind wearing a mask. We should follow CDC guidelines. I won't send my kid to school with the delta variant without a mask mandate. Your current proposal is great middle ground.

Christian Surrilo is a parent of two children in the school district. Ms. Surrilo commented. How does a mask mandate foster individual potential? How many members of this board will stand and take responsibility for the social, emotional, and academic deficiencies that have and will continue to develop due to masks and their impact on learning?

Amanda Wilkey is a parent of children in the district. Ms. Wilkey commented. My children did DLI all last year and are thrilled to return to school this year in masks. We know that Covid kills you and masks don't.

Cristine Sorem is a mother of two kids in the district. Ms. Sorem commented. I am for keeping masks optional, let parents decide what is best for kids. My child had a cold all year because of the masks, and it also gave my kids headaches. I feel if masks are not optional, we will remove kids from the public school.

Jen Davis is a mother of a child in elementary school in the district. Ms. Davis commented. I'm in support of the current proposal of masking in K-8. I think it is a good compromise. It protects unvaccinated children.

Dr. James Bennet is a rheumatologist at St. Peters Health in Helena and a father of two children in the school district. Dr. Bennet commented. We have a common enemy and need to pull together. People who say that N95 masks are the only way to stop the spread is correct. It is not a 100 percent fix, but it improves safety. I'm concerned that the delta variant is as contagious as chicken pox. We must protect everybody. I am in favor of a flexible system. We don't have enough people vaccinated. More people will die if kids bring this home to their family.

Lois Fitzpatrick is a Professor at Carroll college and grandparent of students in the school district. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented. Schools are community centers and have an obligation to the community. Your decisions impact the community. Stay with science-based information and make decisions. This would be a social norm if parents were not so upset about it. Please keep the mask mandate for all of us.

Traci Swingley is a grandparent of children in the district. Ms. Swingley commented. I must echo what Lois ahead of me said. I am requesting that we employ scientific evidence and mandate masks.

Jennifer Filipovich is a mother of two children in the district. Ms. Filipovich commented. We should have two goals for the upcoming year. Keeping students safe and keeping students in school. The most effective tool to do this is to wear masks. Implement a mask mandate.

Jaimie MacNaughton is a parent of students in the district. Ms. MacNaughton commented. I am in support of mandatory masking of all our kids until vaccinations are available. You must provide a healthy environment for my children to attend schools. My students did DLI. We decided to stay home until we could vaccinate. The delta variant is a whole other beast. It requires a minimum the same measures we had in place last year.

Kayluh Menager is a daughter of a 5th grader in the district. Ms. Menager commented. I support masks in schools and the policies that you propose follow the CDC guidelines.

Brandy Swingley is a parent of children in the school district. Ms. Swingley commented in support of masking and said that masking is about protecting the people and kids around you.

RyAnn Christman is a parent of children in the school district. Ms. Christman commented. There are many issues at hand. My son has sensory processing disorder, and he could only do online learning, and they don't offer special education for online learners. My son cannot tolerate masks. This is my child and my choice. You can't enforce masks. Tread lightly. Do not violate your oath of office.

Brandi Powell is a mother of two children. Ms. Powell commented. Just because kids can do it doesn't make it right. I am a mother of two that I had to homeschool last year in reaction to

decisions by this school district. No masks. The CDC does not care about our children. It is not your right to choose what is best for my child.

Dr. Haven Leavitt is a veterinarian in Helena and a parent of an incoming kindergartener. Dr. Leavitt commented. My daughter understands wearing a mask is the best way to keep her and her baby brother safe. I'm excited to hear that you will mask our students. I think all students should mask for one month after high transmission. I support the decision to mask.

Ms. Kellie Guariglia commented that reinstating the mask mandate would help to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and faculty.

Mr. Adam Clinch, a math teacher at Capital High School commented. I want to be in my classroom five days a week for all 180 days of this school year. If we want the best chance of ensuring that, reducing the risk of transmission is the number one priority. The best tool for that is vaccination and the second-best tool is masking. By allowing masking to be optional, in the face of universal recommendations from the scientific and medical communities, you would be creating some serious divisions within our high schools. I urge you to follow the recommendations from the scientific and medical communities (The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Montana Academy of Pediatrics, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention) and institute a universal K-12 indoor mask mandate in our district until the situation changes and so too do those recommendations.

Ms. Linda Crofts, a grandparent and caregiver for children in the Helena School District commented. I'm hoping that the district will implement or keep a policy of masking for students and faculty while the children are indoors. Until children under 12 are able to be vaccinated and build antibodies to the Covid-19 strains/variants they remain vulnerable to illness and even long-term health issues including death. My hope for all children within the district is that if they want to experience in-person learning the schools will remain open and SAFE. I feel it is very difficult for children whose families have vulnerable members to wear their masks (protecting others and themselves) if mask wearing and social distancing are not supported and enforced by the district.

This concluded the portion of public comment. The board members then proceeded to comment.

Board member John McEwen commented. It says here that the Superintendent authorizes, does that mean required?

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. This amendment gives Superintendent Weltz a significant amount of flexibility to implement that mandate as he and his team see fit.

Board member John McEwen commented. Yes, parents have a role in raising their children and yes masks work. Someone mentioned we are not a health care agency. But the school does several things to support the children. We feed them, we transport them, we provided nursing staff when needed. We have 8,000 people in our buildings where disease could be rampant. We also have a public health role that we need to think about. I'll support the policy amendment.

Board member Jennifer Walsh commented. We are asking our students to make up for the shortcomings of our adults. We are having students bear the weight of what adults should have done. At the fair there were no masks, no social distancing, no cleaning of high touch areas. Should wearing masks be the social norm? I don't think so. Are we asking our students to do this weird rollercoaster? I cannot support an amendment to a policy that I would not apply to my own child. I feel like we are punishing students for the actions of adults.

Board Vice Chair Siobhan Hathhorn commented. I like to start with glass half full. Last year we found there is a small part of our student population that does well with DLI. We saw honor students with failing grades. We know we need our teachers. We need to be in school. We as a community need to take good care of our students at all levels. Everyone wants their kids in school with caring adults. I also believe in choice. If you have a choice in getting the vaccination that is a choice. If you are 11 and under in middle and elementary those families do not have a choice to get a vaccination at this point. And other people's actions affect that. Being told to stay home does not support freedom of access to public education. I don't think there is anyone on the board who would do everything the same last year. Covid last year did not affect children. There are several children right now in the ICU with the delta variant. I know as a retired principal the number one priority is safety. If this variant is sending kids at home to the ICU, then we must keep those children safe. We are not in major cities, we are in Montana, and we need to look at the local data and see what is happening here right now in our city. In conclusion, I feel strongly high school families should have choice. If we are having a spike, then I think we need to take on that responsibility. I am in favor of 1905 as proposed.

Board member Libby Goldes commented. We have parents who are passionate about our children. And that's what we love about our schools. Moving forward we want our kids in school and we realize what the absence of being in school means. Kids need to be healthy. Schools require vaccinations and the Covid vaccine may eventually be considered a regular vaccine students will have when they come to school. We don't know what the future holds because things change. You can be vaccinated and still get the variant, but you are not as likely to be as sick. We can have teachers and other staff members be exposed to it and could have a lack of staff to serve our students. We had to close our high schools for 2 weeks in November because we didn't have enough teachers. We want to have the most normal school year possible. This isn't going to be over in a year. Because all the time people are not vaccinated, we have new variants. The CDC has its pluses and minuses. It placed us into complacency. We have heard from local health professionals. We need our kids in schools to wear masks. The recommendation here of having masks when it is high and off when low is confusing to parents. We have been told by the CDC we should wear masks. I personally recommend we change this amendment so that Pre-K-12 wear masks.

Board member Terry Beaver commented. Hindsight is not 20/20. This problem is going to be with us for a long time. It will be a greater problem than the variance we are looking at today. We are directed to provide the most optimal teaching and learning environment. To teach and learn to a masked individual is not optimal at all. Secondly, we in the school district are challenged to provide a safe and secure environment for the child. Teaching and learning and safety and security are combined but when it comes to Covid they don't seem to be. We must find ground in which we can find both. I'm not convinced this proposal does this. I would like to

see options for high school students and that we demand masking for K-8 but after listening to people to tonight I'm not so convinced about that. I'm at a loss. This proposal is too nebulous. It is following scientific data, but I don't know if it is following our data in Helena, MT.

Board member Jennifer McKee commented. I do support this proposal. What a much better position we are in now then last year. Last year every single person was vulnerable. We made massive changes to our lives this year, we have the ability to control the vulnerability of ages 12 and up. I see the logic to not require masks for 12 and up. That isn't true for Pre-K-8. It follows the logic we have been on. To phase in and out of masking is such a profound leap forward and I think it is a solid plan with great logic. It is a significant night and day improvement.

Board member Janet Armstrong commented. This is tough. We are not going to be able to please everyone. We must see what we can do for the common good. Community transmission is so high, and the delta variant is so contagious. I urge everyone-let's try and get the spread down, so we don't have to keep having these discussions. This is the best compromise we have. It's driven by local data and keeps the kids in school. This is not perfect but a good compromise.

Board member student representative Rylie Schoenfeld commented. In the long run masking is the best thing we can do right now. Right now, we need to be patient with the options we have which is this plan.

Board member student representative Eliza Lay commented. The main goal that we are striving for is safety and education together. I think we can achieve this with masks. Masks were a minor inconvenience last year. No one liked it but everyone was willing to do it for the safety of others and I don't feel like learning was inhibited with masks. I would support the amendment and protecting the younger kids is super important. Safety is part of our end goal.

Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented. I want to say thank you to Superintendent Weltz and his team for thinking about this a lot and putting together a good proposal. Mr. Weltz, his team and all the educators are ready to be done with this. We are ready to be done with masks, we are ready to engage with our students and colleagues. It breaks my heart that we are still dealing with this. Our job is to deal with this and make hard decisions. We are accountable for those decisions. Accountable for the rest of our lives. Every person and every family have a different value system and ultimately, I'm really thinking about students that are too young to receive vaccinations. Vaccinations are a choice. Those parents I believe should have a choice to be protected. This is about kids who could be asymptomatic and could infect someone at a greater risk. I'm thinking about the families that do not have a choice. We all know there are other factors. That is our job to think of other factors. I look for compromise. If we adopt this amendment tonight a lot of people tonight will be frustrated. This has lanes and says when it will go away based on what is going on in our community. This is a compromise. I think this amendment protects our families who do not have a choice. I am in support of it.

Vote-7-1 with Jennifer Walsh in opposition. Motion carried.

B. CONSENT ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of 6.08.21 Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of 7.13.21 Summer Board Retreat Minutes
3. Approval of 7.13.21 Summer Board Retreat Closed Session Minutes
4. Approval of Personnel Actions
5. Approval of Warrants
6. Approval of Out of District Attendance Agreement
7. Acknowledgment of Out of District Attendance Agreement
8. Resolution to dispose of personal property – Kitchen Aid mixers
9. Resolution to dispose of personal property – technology equipment
10. Renewal of Multi-District Cooperative Agreement

Motion: Trustee Libby Goldes moved to approve the consent action items. Board Vice Chair Siobhhan Hathhorn seconded the motion.

Public Comment: None

Vote: 7-0 Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz abstained from voting.

C. REPORTS

1. Helena Education Association Report
Jane Shawn, President of the Helena Education Association, commented. I would like further discussions about how members will be affected by COVID leave and possible solutions. I also would like to know expectations and goals with the new standards methods of having instructional coaches in buildings.
2. Budget & Finance Committee Report
Committee Chair John McEwen commented. We will have several items to work on for the calendar year. The budget and finance committee had a very productive meeting in August.
3. Policy Committee Report
Policy Committee did not meet in August and will meet in September.
4. Facilities & Maintenance Report
At the August Facilities and Maintenance meeting the committee reviewed the facilities plan that was completed in 2013. The committee plans on updating the facilities plan.
5. Health Benefits Committee Report
Committee Chair John McEwen commented that the committee did not meet over the summer and that employee brochures were going to be created.
6. Montana School Boards Association Report
Board Chair Luke Muszkiewicz commented that MTSBA will meet in a hybrid meeting style to do strategic planning.
7. Student Representative Report
Fall sports are coming up in the schools.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

Board member Jennifer McKee commented that she wanted to congratulate everyone that attended the meeting tonight on their civility and how everyone handled themselves.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The board meeting adjourned at 10:54 p.m.

Candice Delvaux, Recording Secretary Date