

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022, 8:30 A.M.
MHSA CONFERENCE ROOM-HELENA**

ATTENDANCE

Jim Hawbaker (President), Billings
Doug Reisig (Vice President), Missoula
Krystal Zenter, Bridger
Jimmy Patelis, Billings
Steve Thennis, Helena
John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge
Brian Michelotti
Amy Bartels, Helena
Greta Buehler, Helena
Scott Wilson, Helena
Kip Ryan, Helena
Anna Doran, Helena
Delegations:
Kim Lakko, Plains
Wayne Baker, Plains
Brain Kessler, East Helena
Shaun Murgel, East Helena
Student T.M., East Helena
Robyn Boyle, East Helena
Mike Boyle, East Helena
Jessi Finstead, East Helena
Amber Dara, East Helena
Katie Babbitt, Missoula
Student K.B., Missoula

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

REVISIONS/ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Michelotti gave a schedule overview and revisions to the agenda. Mr. Reisig motioned to adopt the agenda with the revisions. Ms. Zenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the following meeting minutes: April 11-12, 2022; June 22, 2022; July 7, 2022; August 16, 2022; August 24, 2022. Ms. Zenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCES

Mr. Michelotti and Ms. Buehler discussed the bills paid April 1 – August 31, 2022. Mr. Michelotti and Ms. Buehler reviewed the financial statement as of August 31, 2022.

Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the bills paid and the financial statement. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti gave a general office overview. Ms. Bartels reviewed the State Solo and Ensemble financial reports. Mr. Michelotti reviewed the corporate sponsorships and updated the Board on the Playfly status and existing partners. Playfly will place an employee in the MHSA office. Honda, not Toyota, will now sponsor and provide a new vehicle to MHSA.

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL OFFICE REPORT

Mr. Michelotti handed out the General Office Report.

Insurance Overview

The majority of the MHSA insurance package is covered by Payne West with HUB Insurance. There are mild increases in insurance costs. Mr. Reisig asked for more details regarding Travel Accident Life Insurance. Mr. Michelotti explained that the insurance covers transportation to state tournaments. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if MHSA has cyber insurance. MHSA does not but Mr. Michelotti took note of that and will find out more about cyber coverage.

2022 Class AA State Track and Field Meet

It was decided by MHSA and Gallatin High School that Gallatin is not prepared to host the 2022 Class AA/B State Track and Field Meet. Kalispell and Butte were the 2 options for relocation. Butte is centrally located and more affordable for teams. Athletic Director, Chuck Merrifield, said Butte can host. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve Butte as hosting. Ms. Zenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regionalized Basketball Schedule - 14 games

Master schedule committee proposed to schedule conference games. Class A, B, and C schools will schedule their non-conference games. Mr. Reisig motioned to have the master scheduling committee schedule 14 conference games. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Technology

Mr. Michelotti discussed the need for a new MHSA website to increase user traffic. If Dragonfly is not capable of doing so, Playfly is an option. Mr. Michelotti discussed moving all files to a Google platform to provide better functionality.

Social Media

Ms. Bartels will continue to push NFHS on Social Media.

Aim Higher Schedule

Mr. Wilson will travel to Sydney, MT on September 13, 2022, then to Kalispell, Missoula, Butte, Great Falls and Billings to facilitate Aim Higher Workshops. Workshops focus on leadership and sportsmanship and are sponsored by the Montana National Guard.

Other Information

Ms. Buehler is currently working on an Audit with Wipfli. The MHSAs are eligible for the Employee Retention Tax Credit and Wipfli will prepare the application.

Mr. Ryan discussed the Northwestern Energy Academic Excellence Award given to one Montana School in each class. Schools must apply for the award. Northwestern Energy has sponsored the award since 1988. Last year's winners: Class AA Billings Senior; Class A Billings Central; Class B Jefferson; Class C Grass Range.

OFFICE ACTION

Mr. Michelotti stated 33 Hardship Waivers have been submitted this year. Of those, 25 have been approved and eight have been denied.

The 15-year-old rule is no longer necessary because petitions for participation of eighth grade students is no longer necessary. Mr. Ryan discussed that schools are trying to come up with criteria for the eighth-grade student rule and he is helping school districts with policies.

Mr. Michelotti stated there have been 3 penalties imposed thus far, one being a self-report.

TRANSFER RULE APPEAL—PLAINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

The mother, Kim Lakko, and grandfather, Wayne Baker were on the Zoom Meeting.

Mr. Hawbaker gave the option of an open or closed meeting. Ms. Lakko chose to keep the meeting open.

The student lives with Ms. Lakko in Plains. Ms. Lakko teaches in Thompson Falls. The student transferred to Thompson Falls during the pandemic because there was limited in-person education in Plains. The family decided it would be in the best interest of student to have full-time, in-person education at Thompson Falls. Now the student wants to transfer back to Plains (in-person learning has resumed) and play sports. Mr. Hawbaker referred to the By-Laws in the MHSAs Handbook. Mr. Reisig motioned to deny the transfer waiver. He cannot play Varsity until his 90 days are met. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-1 (Dissenting: Zenter).

SEMESTER RULE APPEAL—EAST HELENA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

East Helena student, T.M., his aunt Robin Boyle and presumed uncle Mike Boyle, his cousin Jessi Finstead, East Helena Principal Brian Kessler, and East Helena Athletic Director Shaun Murgel were in attendance. Mr. Hawbaker gave the option of an open or closed meeting. The family chose to keep the meeting open.

T.M. dropped out of Helena High and enrolled at East Helena High School where he redid his freshman year and succeeded. Now, as a senior, T.M. wants to play football at East Helena but it is his ninth semester of high school.

Robin Boyle explained T.M. had a tough family situation. Because personal information was going to be disclosed, the meeting switched from open to closed.

Once the meeting reopened, Mr. Reisig motioned to deny the semester appeal. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY APPEAL—HELLGATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

The mother, Katie Babbitt, and student K.B. were on the Zoom Meeting. Mr. Hawbaker gave the option for a closed or open meeting and they chose to keep it open. K.B. was in a car accident her sophomore year and missed two weeks of school. During this time she was also a victim of assault. The meeting was closed at this point.

Once the meeting reopened, Mr. Reisig moved to approve the academic appeal so that K.B. is eligible to participate in activities at any level. Ms. Zenter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Mr. Hawbaker, Ms. Zenter, Mr. Michelotti, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Ryan attended the National Federation Summer Meeting in San Antonio. Highlights included the introduction of Golf Genius and using the cell phone app to enter scores. The use of electronics in competition was discussed. Mr. Michelotti discussed NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) is happening across the country and MHSA needs to be ahead of the curve.

MCA Clinic, Spirit and MHSA Committee Meeting – Mr. Michelotti requested an additional hour for MHSA next year.

Ms. Bartels stated there were 36 in attendance for the Spirit meeting this year.

The Section 7-8 Meeting will be in Lihue, Hawaii this year. Mr. Michelotti and Mr. Wilson will attend and report next meeting.

Ejections – Mr. Michelotti discussed that fans will be included into the ejection reports (was athlete and coach only).

Mr. Michelotti discussed the Online Clinic Reports are available.

Student Advisory Committee Update – Ms. Bartels reported there are 12 students from all classifications. The delegates begin the program as sophomores and through their senior year.

Soccer Season Updates - Mr. Michelotti discussed that soccer pools in Missoula and Billings have decided to manage their own officials. Mr. Michelotti was interviewed after a soccer official wrote a negative opinion letter about MHSA which resulted in misconduct.

Volleyball Updates – Mr. Ryan discussed the new rule of teams not switching sides during a volleyball game. This procedure began as a Covid precaution but did not go through the committee process. The Covid rule allowed the home team to serve first. This is no longer the rule. The first to serve will go back to a coin flip. The spectators and student section played the biggest part into the not switching sides rule. The setup of the gym could play into the matter.

MHSA/MOA Rules Interpreter Update – Mr. Michelotti was finalizing who will be the volleyball interpreter. Travis Huntsinger, interpreter for football, will work in conjunction with Mr. Wilson. Weekly memos will be taken over by Mr. Huntsinger next year rather than Mr. Wilson. Merle Gunderson will be

the rules interpreter for swimming. Scott Lockwood is the rules interpreter for soccer. Joe Sole is the rules interpreter for wrestling.

The basketball, softball, and track interpreters are to be determined. Interpreters will be paid \$300.00 per year and given a 4-year term. Ms. Zenter asked why that dollar amount and Mr. Michelotti stated it was determined by comparable positions.

Shot Clocks Survey for 2022-2023 – Ms. Buehler said there was 70% response rate from Montana High Schools.

67% do not have a shot clock and over 40% of those cannot confirm if they will have one by the start of the basketball season. This is across all classes and some state there is a backorder on clocks. Could be a supply issue.

Board discussed that shot clock is required for post season play. Mr. Michelotti suggested a memo should go to all Montana High Schools: If you want to host divisional or state, you must have a shot clock. Further, in the 2023-24 season, schools cannot host without a shot clock. Ms. Zenter makes a motion that, for the 22-23 season, basketball teams must notify opponent if they have no shot clock and all post-season games are required to have shot clocks. In addition, for the 23-24 season, all games must be played in facilities with shot clocks. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LEGAL

Mr. Michelotti reported that MHSAA staff and Mark Dennehy (Glacier) and Chuck Merrifield (Butte) met with MHSAA attorney, Bea Kaleva. Mr. Dennehy and Mr. Merrifield opposed the Class AA softball rule that JV and Varsity games shall be played at different times rather than simultaneously. This is largely due to the amount of time it takes to travel combined with play time. The parties came up with a compromise for the 2023 softball season. Each AA school can schedule Varsity and JV to be played simultaneously 4 times (8 games) during the season. Mr. Reisig motioned to adopt this scheduling rule. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NFHS NETWORK REIMBURSEMENT

Mr. Wilson discussed the direction for allocating the \$150,000 received from the Network. An additional payment will be received in January (projected to be \$85,000) and Mr. Wilson thinks one check should be distributed to each school after January's payment. MHSAA has previously been paid \$35,000 from the Network and Mr. Wilson believes the \$35,000 payment should continue.

Mr. Wilson then discussed his reimbursement proposal for a point system using commitment length, games streamed and viewership. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the point system as presented (with flexibility based on the data), and Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUESTS

Ms. Bartels presented the proposed 2022-23 music handbook changes and the request to add a new festival district. Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the changes to the Music handbook as well as a new district, and Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Bartels presented a request for changes to the speech and debate postseason procedures language in the handbook to make all classifications consistent. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the changes, and Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Bartels requested the addition of language regarding eighth graders stunting be added to the spirit section of the handbook. She also requested to add an additional member to the Spirit Committee for dance. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the language, and Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the additional committee member, and Mr. Reisig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Eastern C requested to send the 6th place finishers from their divisional track meet to state. Currently only 5 place winners in each event make it to state while other divisions have 6 or 7 place finishers advance to state. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the 6th-place finishers advancing to state, and Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti presented his recommendations for the new MOA/MHSA Leadership Committee.

Mr. Michelotti briefly spoke to the Board priorities. He also proposed new language for emerging sports.

Mr. Wilson discussed the sites considered for placement of the 2024 Section 7/8 Meeting in Montana. He visited Grouse Mountain Lodge and Big Sky Resort, but Big Sky is unavailable during the dates requested. Mr. Thennis motioned to approve the Grouse Mountain Lodge bid, and Mr. Reisig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL

Mr. Ryan previewed the new committee appointments. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the proposed committee appointments, and Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti highlighted issues to be discussed at the November Board meeting, including realignment, reclassification, athletic committee recommendations and annual meeting proposals.

Mr. Hawbaker assigned Board members to fall and early winter activities.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

The Annual Meeting will be held in Missoula in January

Mr. Michelotti updated the Board on a situation with the Columbia Falls football coach. The school administration responded appropriately in addressing the issue.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:19 p.m.

Executive Director Brian Michelotti

MHSA President Jim Hawbaker