

**MHSA Executive Board Meeting
Helena Public Schools Administration Building
1325 Poplar St, Helena, MT 59601
November 21, 2022**

ATTENDANCE

Jim Hawbaker (President), Billings
Doug Reisig (Vice President), Missoula -Zoom
Krystal Zentner, Bridger
Jimmy Patelis, Billings
Steve Thennis, Helena
John Fitzgerald, Red Lodge
Luke Kloker, Fairview
Brian Michelotti, Helena
Amy Bartels, Helena
Greta Buehler, Helena
Scott Wilson, Helena
Kip Ryan, Helena
Anna Doran, Helena
Ryan Richards, Helena
Delegations:
Larry Crowder, Culbertson
Greg Hardy, Scobey
Dan Grabowska, Park City
Cole Cavan, Park City
Kurtis Koenig, Whitehall
Mike Perry, Arlee
Mitch Ward, Broadview
Francine Jensen, Lavina
Reid Michel, Dutton/Brady
Willie Widhalm, Power
John O'Dell, Broadwater
B.W., Broadwater
Mike Schnittgen, Broadwater
Brandon Gondeiro, Highwood
David Perkins, Custer
Brad Hoffman, Custer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hawbaker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

REVISIONS/ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Michelotti gave a schedule overview and revisions to the agenda.

PUBLIC INPUT STATEMENT

Mr. Hawbaker read the Montana Open Meeting Law.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the following meeting minutes: September 12, 2022, and September 29, 2022. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCES

Mr. Michelotti reviewed the bills paid September 1 to October 31, 2022. New equipment was purchased for the state volleyball tournament. Payments to consultant, Mark Beckman, end January 1, 2023. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the bills paid. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti reviewed the financial statement through October 31, 2022. He gave an overview of the new corporate sponsorships and introduced the new Playfly employee, Ryan Richards. Mr. Kloker motioned to approve the financial statement. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

General Office Report

Recent events: Mr. Michelotti and Mr. Reisig met with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Director, Elsie Arntzen. They discussed topics that will arise during the 2023 legislative session that may directly affect MHSA including homeschool and transgender bills.

Coming events: Mr. Michelotti discussed the upcoming events: The MOA Regional Directors Meeting is December 4-5; NFHS Winter Meeting is January 3-6 in Fort Lauderdale; 2023 Montana Legislative Session; MHSA Annual Meeting is January 14-16 in Missoula.

MHSA Corporate Sponsorships: Mr. Richards will continue to expand sponsorships. An article in Bright Magazine featured the 34-year partnership between NorthWestern Energy and MHSA. Partnerships with Logan Health and Golf Genius are in progress. Honda is a new partner and supplied MHSA with a new vehicle. Thus, the Ford Edge will be sold. The online ticket program, GoFan, has proven to be efficient.

Staff Update: Ms. Bartels is back from maternity leave. Ms. Doran helped with MOA and soccer duties when she was on leave. Jane Ryan helped with record keeping and volleyball post season ballots among other office tasks. The rules interpreters have been helpful with their expertise and guidance.

MHSA Building Market Analysis: Mr. Michelotti said the process is underway to find a new workspace for MHSA. There is need for an ADA compatible building and a large, well-lit conference room. A market analysis was conducted by local Realtor, Julie Lamb Heller. Properties are hard to come by in the current Helena market.

NFHS Network Reimbursement: Mr. Wilson stated that profit shares are less than projected. While the number of views skyrockets during COVID, they are currently down due to in-person spectating. MHSA reached the 100% goal of member participation. Each school will receive a check based on viewership.

Mr. Wilson has requested additional data from NFHS because free events (music) and paid events (sports) were categorized together.

Social Media: Ms. Bartels is going through the process of adding the Student Advisory Committee to Facebook and Instagram. Waivers must be signed for participating minors.

Technology: Mr. Michelotti and Mr. Wilson will meet with Arbiter (competitor of Dragonfly) on December 7 to see what they can offer in streamlining technology for MHSA.

Other Issues: Mr. Michelotti shared the unofficial member schools fall enrollment numbers from OPI. Mr. Michelotti shared emails regarding Class AA Softball scheduling. There is a \$500,000 grant through the Department of Environmental Equality that would pay for new smoke monitors in the 182 member schools. The monitors give more accurate readings than those found on weather apps. The goal is to protect student athletes from unsafe smoke levels.

Board Questions, Comments or Concerns: Mr. Kloker asked if football post-season ticket prices need to be raised. The prices are less than regular season games. Mr. Michelotti said the prices have not changed in 10 years and he will conduct a price increase analysis. Mr. Reisig asked whether the Park High School bond passed. It did not.

OFFICE ACTION

Mr. Michelotti stated that 70% of the Waivers of Transfer Rule have passed. There was a Waiver of the Age Rule by a 19-year-old football player in Fort Benton. He will have to go through the process again for winter and or spring sports. Two penalties have been imposed.

REPORTS

State Tournaments/Meets

Cross Country: Mr. Ryan and Mr. Reisig reported that the All-Class State Cross Country Meet held in Missoula was a successful event. The student athletes were polite, and the event coordinators were excellent.

Golf: Mr. Thennis and Mr. Michelotti reported that the Class AA State Golf Tournament in Helena was well run. The event coordinators were excellent. Mr. Michelotti noted that Golf Genius added to the excitement of the tournament and was easy for fans to follow. Mr. Wilson said that while there was an interesting parking situation at the Class A State Golf Tournament in Hamilton, everything else went smoothly. He said that better marking on the course would be helpful for parking.

Football: Mr. Patelis attended the Class B State Football Championship in Florence (vs. Loyola Sacred Heart). The snow removal and fans were part of what made the event so successful. Mr. Wilson attended the 8-Player State Football Championship in St. Ignatius (vs. Belt). The game was exciting, and the fans were supportive. Ms. Zentner attended the 6-Player State Football Championship in Big Sandy (vs. Broadview/Lavina). There was a drone issue that was resolved. Everything else went smoothly. Mr. Michelotti said the Class AA State Football Championship in Helena (Capital vs. Bozeman) was another great event.

Volleyball: Mr. Ryan reported that the All-Class State Volleyball Tournament was a well-organized and successful in Bozeman. All teams and officials were great.

Soccer: Mr. Michelotti reported that the Class AA Soccer Championships went well. He noted there were over 1,000 fans at the game in Bozeman, yet they were not charged for the event. Charging for the event would be beneficial and perhaps MHSAA could step in to help next season. The Class A Championships went smoothly as well.

Music: Mr. Patelis attended the All-Class State Band, Orchestra, and Chorus Competition and remarked that it was a well-run, successful event.

Ejections

Mr. Michelotti clarified that that belligerent spectators should be removed by administrators, not the officials.

AIM Higher

Scott Wilson said the turnout of student participation was excellent in Northeastern Montana. Great Falls and Billings had the best turnout. None of the AA schools in Missoula participated.

MHSAA/MOA Leadership Committee

Mr. Hawbaker and Mr. Michelotti participated in the committee. There was discussion on the importance of humanizing officials because they are often treated poorly by spectators. Officials' pay will eventually have to increase. Other topics included paying soccer assigners and consideration of 1-way mileage for all officials (would eliminate carpool confusion).

MHSAA Athletic Committee

Mr. Ryan reported that there was a proposal from the volleyball committee to go back to the standard coin flip rule. Teams stopped switching benches during Covid-19. Advantages would be observing the setter from a different angle and some courts have obstacles on one side. Disadvantages include the away team playing near the opposing teams' student section. Mr. Reisig motioned to move forward with the proposal. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LEGAL

Mr. Michelotti said there was nothing new to report.

DELEGATIONS/APPEALS

Eastern C - District 2/3 Realignment Request

Delegates Larry Crowder, Culbertson Superintendent, and Greg Hardy, Scobey Superintendent, requested to move Circle High School from District 2 to District 3. They said it made sense from a mileage standpoint. It also created a balance as each district would get to send four teams to Divisionals. Circle does not want to move because of the relationships it has developed in District 4. Circle did not communicate or submit paperwork to MHSAA regarding the issue. Mr. Reisig motioned to move Circle to District 3. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. A roll call took place and the motion passed unanimously.

Park City Classification Appeal

Delegates Dan Grabowska, Park City Superintendent, and Cole Cavan, Park City Activities Director, appealed to move Park City to Class C after it was moved to Class B last April when enrollment increased. Mr. Grabowska said the numbers went up during Covid because their school had in-person education. Now that neighboring schools offer in-person education, numbers have decreased. Enrollment is projected to move under 100. Additionally, the Park City facility is small. Mr. Reisig motioned to allow Park City to remain in Class C. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. Roll call was taken and Mr. Thennis denied, Mr. Fitzgerald denied, Mr. Patelis denied, Mr. Kloker approved, Mr. Hawbaker denied. The motion failed 4-3.

Class B Realignment Request

Delegates Kurtis Koenig, Whitehall Activities Director, and Mike Perry, Arlee Superintendent, proposed to move Class B from three into four divisions. Mr. Koenig provided a detailed handout which he read. While the work of the realignment committee was appreciated, member schools from Class B would have to support a change of this magnitude with a supermajority which they had not. Mr. Kloker motioned to deny the request. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion failed unanimously.

Transfer Appeal

Delegates John O'Dell, Broadwater Activities Director; Mike Schnittgen, Broadwater Counselor; BW, Broadwater student requested a waiver of the transfer rule. BW attended Beaverhead High School prior to transferring to Broadwater High School. BW was adopted in sixth grade by local teachers. After difficulties at home, BW emancipated herself and moved to Townsend. Mr. O'Dell said BW was thriving in her new situation. Mr. Reisig motioned to approve the waiver of the transfer rule. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reclassification/Realignment Requests

Delegate Mike Perry, Arlee Superintendent, said Eleven-Player Football is not in the best interest of Arlee. Their roster does not support it. Mr. Wilson stated that Arlee's roster is the average size for Eight-Player Football. Mr. Reisig motioned to allow Arlee to remain in the Eight-Player Classification. Mr. Kloker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegates Jason Sargent, St. Ignatius Superintendent, and Stuart Grant, St. Ignatius Activities Director, requested their football program remain in the Eight-Player Classification. While they had a successful team this season, they will be down in numbers next year. Mr. Reisig motioned to allow St. Ignatius to remain in the Eight-Player Classification. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegate Barry Rowison, Joliet Activities Director, requested their football program remain in the Eight-Player Classification. Half the roster will be underclassman next season and enrollment is projected to decrease. Mr. Patelis motioned to deny the appeal. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. Mr. Kloker and Mr. Hawbaker opposed. The motion passed 5-2.

Delegate Blake Lampert, Grenora Activities Director, requested that their football team, Westby-Grenora, move to the Six-Player Classification. He said enrollment has decreased. Mr. Kloker motioned that Westby-Grenora move to the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegates David Perkins, Custer Superintendent; Brad Hoffman, Custer Football Coach; Kerry Roberts, Hysham Activities Director; Willie Thibault, Hysham Superintendent; and Tracy Pare, Melstone Principal, requested their dwindling co-op remain in the Six-Player Classification. Their enrollment is projected to decrease. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned the co-op remain in the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegates Mitch Ward, Broadview Superintendent and Activities Director and Francine Jensen, Lavina Activities Director requested their football co-op move to the Six-Player Classification. The team was not successful in Eight-Player. Enrollment is up but participation in football has decreased. Their roster falls in the average range for Six-Player. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned that the co-op moves to the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Kloker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegate Kara Triplett, Richey/Lambert Activities Director, requested their football team remain in the Six-Player Classification. Their enrollment does not exceed 70 and is projected to decrease next year. The roster size is in the average range and their success rate is decent. Mr. Reisig motioned that Richey/Lambert remain in the Six-Player Classification. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegate Matt Havens, Noxon Activities Director, requested their football team remain in the Six-Player Classification. Their enrollment and roster size fall within the parameters of the classification. Mr. Kloker motioned that Noxon remain in the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegates Reid Michel, Dutton/Brady Activities Director; and Willie Widhalm, Power Activities Director requested their football co-op remain in the Six-Player Classification. Their enrollment is under 70 and is projected to remain static. Mr. Patelis motioned the co-op remain in the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Delegates Mike Taylor, Centerville Principal, and Brian Davison, Centerville Activities Director, requested their football team remain in the Six-Player Classification. The roster is inconsistent, and the enrollment has significant more girls than boys. Mr. Reisig motioned that Centerville remain in the Six-Player Classification. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Remain in Eight-Player

A bulk motion was made that the following member schools remain in the Eight-Player Classification due their roster size and success factor: Poplar, Powell County, Lame Deer, Lodge Grass, Harlem/Turner, Rocky Boy, Saint Labre -JV, and Plains. Mr. Reisig motioned the member schools listed remain in the Eight-Player Classification. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Remain in Six-Player

A bulk motion was made that the following member schools remain in the Six-Player Classification due their roster size and success factor: Box Elder, Northern Cheyenne-JV, West Yellowstone, Harlowtown/Ryegate/Judith Gap, Heart Butte, Plenty Coups, and Absarokee. Mr. Kloker motioned the member schools listed remain in the 6-Player Classification. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made that Wibaux move from the Six-Player to Eight-Player Classification. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned the move to Eight-Player. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Schools- Proposals to Rules and Regulations

The Class A realignment will begin in the 2023-24 school year. Class A member schools voted 17-6 in favor of the realignment. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the Class A realignment. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Michelotti suggested there be a December meeting for Class C and B Classification Realignment after already having 25 appeals during this meeting. Mr. Kloker motioned that the remaining Class C and Class B Realignments will be addressed on the January 12, 2023, Executive Board Meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUESTS

Western C Basketball and Volleyball Bracket Approval

Ms. Zentner motioned to approve the Western C Basketball and Volleyball Bracket. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

District 5C Basketball Tournament Bracket Approval

Mr. Patelis motioned to approve District 5C Basketball Tournament Bracket. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

District 3C Basketball Tournament Bracket Approval

A four officials per game, four-day tournament proposal was made. This would be difficult to approve because officials would have to take an additional day off work and would make less money with fewer games per day. Mr. Reisig motioned to deny the 3C Basketball Tournament Bracket proposal. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. Ms. Zentner opposed the motion. The motion passed 6-1.

Southern B Basketball Tournament Bracket Approval

Mr. Kloker motioned to approve the Southern B Basketball Tournament Bracket. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2024-2025 Calendar

Mr. Wilson said with a late Thanksgiving and late Memorial Day, baseball practice will have to begin during basketball divisional tournaments. Mr. Patelis motioned to approve the 2024-2025 calendar. Ms. Zentner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Student Leadership Advisory Committee

Ms. Bartels said the committee finalized the logo for the posters that will be displayed in member schools. No action taken.

2023 Class A Tennis Tournament – Location Change Request

Ms. Buehler said the courts in Ronan are not suitable for the state tournament. Therefore, the tournament will be in Missoula. Ms. Zentner motioned to move the 2023 Class A Tennis Tournament from Polson/Ronan to Missoula. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2023 State Baseball Tournament Bid Placement

Mr. Wilson said the state tournament bid went to Butte. Mr. Kloker motioned that the All-Class 2023 State Baseball Tournament will take place in Butte. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-op Dissolution

Mr. Wilson said a request was made to dissolve the Baker/Plevna Football Co-op. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned for the dissolution of the Baker/Plevna Football Co-op. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

District 12 and 13 Music Districts

Mr. Michelotti said it made sense from a logistical standpoint to combine Music Districts 12 and 13. Mr. Reisig motioned to combine Music Districts 12 and 13. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

General

The MHSAA Class AA Softball season adjustments was tabled until January.

Mr. Michelotti recommended to approve the following items:

- 1) The language for the 2022-23 Spirit section of the MHSAA Handbook: eight grade students approved to participate on the high school cheer or dance team may participate in stunting with approval from their school administration. No students younger than eighth grade may participate in stunting in any capacity.
- 2) The Eastern C Track and Field requested to allow sixth place from Divisionals to qualify for state.

Mr. Kloker motioned to approve the new Spirit language and the Track and Field change. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ryan discussed the MHSAA Committee Appointments.

ANNUAL MEETING

Mr. Michelotti and Mr. Ryan outlined the schedule of activities that will take place at the annual meeting in Missoula on January 14-16, 2023, at the Holiday Inn Downtown. Mark Brajcich, the Parliamentarian has retired. Dennis Murphy is a possible replacement. Mr. Michelotti and Mr. Ryan outlined the caucus items gave and a summary of awards' selections.

PROPOSALS/ANNUAL MEETING

Schools' Proposals to Rules and Regulations

Coaching – Is the board willing to create a proposal that a coach cannot coach out of season (other than June and July)? Further, how would this be managed? Mr. Michelotti will draft a proposal to present to the board.

Addition of Lacrosse (Missoula Hellgate) and E-Sports proposal.

Schools' Proposals to By-Laws

Nowhere in the bylaws does it state there needs school board approval for the 8th grade rule. Ms. Zentner will research this with Montana School Board Association.

PROPOSED BUDGET

2023-24 Budget Review

Mr. Michelotti said that corporate sponsorships are up. He suggested a 4% increase in the MHSA Budget. Mr. Patelis suggested that looking at the national average, it should be at least 6%. This would not increase raising the dues for member schools. Mr. Michelotti said he will revisit the proposal.

OTHER ITEMS

Southern C Basketball and Track Realignment

The proposal would move Reed Point and Rapelje - giving Districts 4, 5, and 6 the same number of member schools. Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to approve the Southern C Basketball and Track Realignment. Mr. Patelis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ryan Southern C Track Qualifying Change. Mr. Kloker motioned to approve the proposal. Mr. Thennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

