

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J  
1201 TEXAS AVENUE  
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2016

**CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Brett Costley.

MEETING CALLED  
TO ORDER

**Board Present:** Brett Costley, Greg Kintz, Cari Levenseller, and Katie Cook. Susan Wagner arrived at 6:04 p.m. Ernie Smith arrived at 6:06 p.m. Brittanie Roberts arrived at 6:19 p.m.

BOARD PRESENT

**Board Absent:** None

BOARD ABSENT  
STAFF PRESENT

**Staff Present:** Aaron Miller, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, Middle/High School Principal; Dawn Plews, Business Manager via phone; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; David Spackman, Joanie Jones and Juliet Safier Licensed Staff; Glenda Delemos and Amanda Wolf, Classified Staff; and Gretchen Lindauer, Food Service Director.

**Visitors Present:** Brendan Watkins, Kate Pattison, Scott Laird, Amy Cieloha, Amanda Sicard, Tobie Finzel, Jeana Gump, Terry Lindauer, and Erin Stokes.

VISITORS PRESENT

1.1 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE

1.2 Agenda Review: There were no adjustments to the agenda. Cari Levenseller moved to approve the agenda as presented. Katie Cook seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

AGENDA REVIEW

2.0 **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** Amy Cieloha, has withdrawn one of her students due to personal reasons. She suggested that the District talk to students to get their opinions about the schools. Mr. Miller shared that through the upcoming Strategic Planning Process that will be beginning this Saturday, all input gathered from students, parents, and community will have value.

PUBLIC COMMENT

3.0 **CONSENT AGENDA:**

CONSENT AGENDA

3.1 Minutes of 02/11/2016 Regular Meeting.

Katie Cook moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

MINUTES APPROVED

4.0 **REPORTS & DISCUSSION**

4.1 **Student Reports:** VHS Leadership student Amanda Sicard updated the Board:

STUDENT REPORTS

- Winter sports highlights include Jake Harbour taking 5<sup>th</sup> at state wrestling, girls basketball 9<sup>th</sup> in State and the Boys team took home the state championship.
- Juniors and Seniors recently attended a Career Expo in Portland
- March 11 – Sophomore Class fundraiser – Talent Show
- March 17 – Junior Class fundraiser – Donkey Basketball
- April 23 – Prom
- Robotics has their first competition this weekend
- Spring sports starting competition soon.
- Band Movie Music fundraiser went well. Competition coming up in a couple weeks.

4.2 **Building Reports:** Mr. Underwood talked about MS/HS Attendance. A student is considered to be chronically absent if they miss 10% of instructional days. Any absence counts towards this including missing school for athletic events or illness. Data was pulled for the year up to March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The following percentages at each grade level are considered chronically absent:

BUILDING REPORTS

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – 47%
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – 34%
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – 42%
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade – 52%

- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade – 50%
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade – 50%
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade – 48%
- Foreign Exchange Students – 0%

Ernie Smith commented that the automated calling system is not accurate. According to Mr. Underwood it is as accurate as can be and relies on data being entered correctly and timely by teachers.

Brittanie Roberts arrived at 6:19 p.m.

Mr. Underwood shared that teachers are excited to receive the training for the Willamette Promise program. Ms. Riley (Science) and Ms. Frederiksen (Math) are trained to be able to administer tests for college credit. He was not sure on the status of Ms. Willard (Spanish) and Mr. Whiteman (Chemistry). Writing 121 has been put off until next year.

Another option, the NW Promise through the ESD may offer more elective options. Mr. Underwood is looking at this in the hopes of providing as many opportunities as possible to our students.

Currently per board policy, there are four foreign exchange programs approved. Two other companies have approached community members about placing students at VHS. Mr. Underwood is proposing that these two companies be allowed to place students next year on a trial basis. Per the policy, upon completion of a successful year, the program can be added to the policy as an approved program if the board wishes. Erin Stokes, CET USA (Council for Education Travel) introduced herself.

Aaron Miller reported that he and his team are looking at student numbers and classroom structure for next year. The team agrees to not continue with K-2 blend. The final decision on how the grades will be structured depends on the number of students that move into the District over the summer. They are currently looking at two possible options, both of which do not require any change in personnel.

Mr. Spackman shared information on Elementary attendance. The main attendance goal this year was to have more contact with parents about attendance. Teachers call parents when a student has 4 absences – year to date – 94 students. Counselor contacts parents at 8 absences – 19 students. Principal contacts on parent at 12 absences – 7 students. The three year comparison on overall attendance rate and chronically absent students is:

- Overall Attendance: 2013-14 – 94%    2014-15 – 94%    2015-16 – 95%
- Chronically Absent: 2013-14 – 17%    2014-15 – 11%    2015-16 – 12%

It is proven that attendance is critically important to academic success. Mr. Spackman visits classrooms every two weeks and talks about attendance at each visit. He is seeing improvements.

- 4.3 Financial Report:** Dawn Plews called in to the meeting via phone. She quickly highlighted her financial report by saying not much has changed from last month. Enrollment has increased slightly. She noted that the ending fund balance does not reflect the transfer that will need to be made to the debt service shortfall which will likely be \$230,000.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Brendan Watkins, PiperJaffray Associate, spoke to the Board on the advantage of refinancing our current bonds and offering a savings to tax payers by securing a lower interest rate. Current rates (through 5/15/16) would net cash flow savings of just under \$700,000 to the overall bond obligation.

CURRENT BOND  
REFINANCE OPTION  
DISCUSSED

Mr. Miller stated this is like refinancing a home loan. Brett Costley asked for confirmation that there is no cash coming to the District. Correct there would be no change to the district budget. This would be a savings to the tax payers only. The benefit to the District is that by lowering the rate it increases the borrowing capacity. School Districts are allowed to have 7.95% of real market

value in debt. There is only one opportunity to do this and have the transfer be tax free. This does not require voter approval. Only new money would have to go to the voters.

Aaron Miller stated that he has looked at our debt and prior payments covered by fundraising efforts from the Met Group, grants, and Legislative options. Our ability to make the \$500K annual payments through these options has unfortunately come to an end. This year the unsupported balance of the annual debt payments will impact our ending fund balance. Next year the full \$500K will come out of the general fund.

DISTRICT DEBT  
PAYMENTS  
DISCUSSED

Reducing the general fund to cover the annual debt payment would impact the district severely. Mr. Miller shared possible options to reduce district expenditures and balance next year's budget; cut 19 school days, cut 5.9 teaching positions, cut 11.6 instructional assistant positions, and other options such as athletic programs and transportation.

FUTURE BOND  
OPTION DISCUSSED

Refinancing the existing bonds to save the tax payers and in turn consider going out for another bond is an option the District must consider to avoid the above cuts. With the passing of the 2010 bond, voters approved \$1.90 per \$1,000 of value. The actual rate being levied between now and 2035 is only \$1.67 per \$1,000. The \$0.23 less than the community approved, could roll into an upcoming bond and would help net much of the funding needed to pay off the debt.

If the District were to consider another bond there is the possibility of state matching funds through the OSCIM funds approved by the legislature. There is up to \$4 million available to districts that pass local bonds in the May 2016, November 2016 or May 2017 elections. Recipients would be selected via a lottery option. Any matching funds could be used to finalize construction on the campus such as a football and track complex.

**4.4 Maintenance Report:** The board reviewed Mark Brown's report. Susan Wagner asked if the security cameras are in use. Yes. Ernie Smith stated his frustration with vandalism happening at school. Katie Cook feels we need to do whatever we can to help families at home.

MAINTENANCE  
REPORT

**4.5 NWRESD Annual Report:** Aaron Miller reviewed the report which shows the services received by the Vernonia School District during the 2014-15 school year. The ESD support is vital to small districts that don't have the need or the resources to offer these services on a full time basis.

NWRESD ANNUAL  
REPORT REVIEWED

## 5.0 INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

**5.1 Draft 2016-17 Instructional Calendar:** Mr. Underwood reported that the calendar committee met and presents the draft calendar for next year. There are no add backs or cuts and it is similar to this year's calendar. The draft maintains required seat time and has three built-in snow days.

2016-17  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
CALENDAR  
DISCUSSED

## 6.0 ACTION ITEMS

**6.1 Policy Update:** Policies presented for approval included: AC, EBCB, EBC/EBCA, EFA, GAA, GDA, GBK/JFCG/KGC, GCDA/GDDA, JECB, JEDA, JFCF, JFCG/JFCH, JFCI, JG, JGD, JGE, JHCDA, KGB, and KL. Ernie Smith moved to approve the policy updates as presented. Greg Kintz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

POLICY UPDATES  
APPROVED

**6.2 2016-17 Instructional Calendar:** Cari Levenseller moved to approve the 2016-17 Instructional Calendar as presented. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2016-17  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
CALENDAR  
APPROVED

## 7.0 SUPERINTENDENT REPORT: Aaron Miller updated the board:

- Asst. Ex Dir OSAA sent an email complementing our boys behavior at the State Basketball Tournament.
- Softball Field Update –WOEC will assist with installing the backstop poles on April 7<sup>th</sup> weather permitting. A couple weeks after that we should be playing home games.

SUPERINTENDENT  
REPORT

- Brett Costley thanked Katie Cook for submitting a column to Vernonia's Voice.

**8.0 RECESS TO WORKSHOP at 8:00 p.m.**

RECESS TO  
WORKSHOP

**Strategic Planning:** Kate Pattison has been doing strategic planning for a number of years and has worked with schools and nonprofits. She's been in district all day and stated it was a pleasure to see a day in the life of Vernonia Schools.

She review strategic planning vocabulary and jargon and talked about goals. The district's guiding principles were reviewed and board members were encouraged to reconnect with the principles.

- We believe in providing a safe, caring environment which celebrates and honors differences.
- We believe that our schools inspire our students to become lifelong learners through quality instruction based on meaningful, challenging and exciting experiences.
- We believe in preparing students to become confident, productive citizens in the global community.
- We believe in building a collaborative relationship with our community based on respect, trust, honesty and open communication.

Kate worked with staff earlier today and then had the board work through the same activity pairing students, teachers, community and district with areas of focus and then rate these areas of focus as low, moderate or high in difficulty of achieving. She will be gathering information from the community at two upcoming community forums. Once this has been done she will provide a written report to the district.

**RETURNED TO REGULAR SESSION at 8:40 p.m.**

**9.0 RECESS to EXECUTIVE SESSION under ORS 192.660 (2) (i) at 8:40 p.m. to discuss Administrative Contract renewals.**

RECESS TO  
EXECUTIVE SESSION

**10.0 RETURN to REGULAR SESSION at 9:00 p.m.**

RETURN TO  
REGULAR SESSION

**11.0 ACTION ITEM**

**10.1 Approve Resolution #1516-04 Administrator Contract Extensions:** Ernie Smith moved to adopt Resolution #1516-04 Administrative Contract Extension as presented. Brittanie Roberts seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION #1516-  
03 ADOPTED

**12.0 MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:03 p.m.**

ADJOURNED

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Directors

Board Chair

District Clerk