

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J
1201 TEXAS AVENUE
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: A Workshop of the Board of Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 9:08 a.m. by Brett Costley.

MEETING CALLED
TO ORDER

Board Present: Brett Costley, Katie Cook, Brittanie Roberts, Susan Wagner, Melissa Zavales, and Stacey Pelster.

BOARD PRESENT

Board Absent: Greg Kintz

BOARD ABSENT

Staff Present: Aaron Miller, Superintendent; and Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

STAFF PRESENT

Visitors Present: Renee Sessler, OSBA.

VISITORS

Roles & Responsibilities Presentation: Renee Sessler, OSBA presented on Roles and Responsibilities.

ROLES &
RESPONSIBILITIES

Topics the Board identified for discussion:

- Basic Board work
- What Not to Do – Grey areas
- Social Media Wisdom – (contact Rachel Fleenor at OSBA as reference rfleenor@osba.org)

The Board was asked what excites you most about Board work? Also, What if anything, gives you pause about being a board member. The Board shared their responses.

5 Best Practice Roles that Promote Student Achievement

1. Learn as a team
2. Set clear expectations
3. Provide support for success – be willing to provide time and sometimes funding if needed
4. Hold the system accountable – evaluate and revise as necessary
5. Create the public will to succeed – engagement and advocacy

Board Work:

- Approve hires, leaves of absence or resignations.
- Not recommended to sit on screening committees to hire administrators
- Bargaining Unit contracts

A Board & Superintendent Roles quiz was taken by all.

Communication:

Board members communicate to the Staff through the Superintendent. Staff should communicate to Board through the Superintendent. When facing an upcoming decision, board members should not solicit information from parents and/or staff unless information is provided to all board and held in a public meeting. It is critical to share with the full board any information gathered. If the board has already acted and the work is done Board members can talk about it as much as they like. It was recommended that the Board review the Board's Best Friend policy – BBF annually in July or August.

COMMUNICATION

Be aware of social media and communicating via email. Never hit reply all in email. If you want something sent out to all board members send it to the Superintendent or Secretary and have them send it to the board group.

Board members are individuals but as a board they are a single entity. Each Board member shared where they were from, what child order they are in, and an interest or challenging fact from childhood.

Community:

Perception is very important. Board members should never meet in public social events. Anytime there are four board members together there is a quorum and public meeting laws must be followed.

COMMUNITY
PERCEPTION

How is Vernonia different as a community?

- Still smoke in Vernonia
- One school community

HOW IS
VERNONIA
DIFFERENT?

- Lack of local resources
- Rural / high poverty
- Predominantly a white community but very diverse population varying philosophies
- Natural surroundings
- Safe, people know each other, kids can walk around town
- Parents are alerted about kids by community members
- Everyone comes together to help in time of need
- Neighbors know each other
- Teenagers are friendly with adults, even strangers

What does the community say about you as a Board:

Positive Examples on the surface:

- Listening skills
- All vested in youth
- Diverse backgrounds of the board – bring diversity to the table with respect
- Comfortable sharing in opinions and positions
- Can agree to disagree
- Informed about community at large
- Respectful
- Questions and discussions that come up at board meetings are relevant to work of board
- Transparent
- Patient in respect to time, will meet as long as it takes
- Have necessary information so they are prepared

What drives the Positive Examples – below the surface:

- Takes the job seriously
- Invested
- Focused on students' needs, not personal needs or wants
- Wants to have correct knowledge
- Believe if schools and kids don't do well, our entire community fails
- Want to make a difference for the future
- Considers all points of view because they value the community
- Not rigid in mindset, flexible to consider multiple points of view
- Believes even if they disagree individually, once the board acts, they support the decision

Negative Examples on the surface:

- Board Chair tends to rush discussion sometimes but others express a need to continue discussion
- Constraints that public meeting law has on freedom to discuss items candidly
- Not well studied on topics of discussion
- This is how we always do it and/or requirements focused on us by the Law. This is not always explained in detail to new board members.
- New Board members not well oriented to board practices.
- Lack of understanding of Board processes
- Inexperience of financial understanding and the budget
- Afraid to ask questions
- Holding pre-determined opinions / judgments
- Showing up late to meetings, lack of quorum, or not showing up at all
- Conflict of Board role and being a community member

Under the Surface – unseen factors:

- Strong personality and bias of the Chair
- Lack of knowledge of Board Chair role / authority
- Fear of ability to push back
- Complex and sometimes boring topics before the board
- Attitudes
- Don't know available resources - where to turn so might go to the wrong resource

Discussion was held on increasing the number of parents to attend Board meetings. Student speakers seems to be the best way. Perhaps provide a certificate to elementary students that come and talk.

WHAT DOES
COMMUNITY SAY
ABOUT THE
SCHOOL BOARD?

HOW TO
INCREASE BOARD
MEETING
ATTENDANCE

Board Operating Agreement:

Sample school board operating agreements were shared and it was encouraged that the Vernonia School Board

BOARD OPERAT-
ING AGREEMENT

develop their own. Adopting and supporting each other and helping to hold all accountable will in the end set everyone up to be successful. Schedule the Board self-evaluation at the same time the Superintendent evaluation is done.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

Superintendent Evaluation:

In the Fall set out the criteria for Superintendent goals. Determine how to score and what criteria will be used to determine if the goal was met. This discussion must be in public. The Board can meet in Executive Session to discuss whether or not the goal was met but then must come back to public session to read a summary of the discussion. Then action can be taken to extend the contract and adjust compensation.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Licensed Staff Leave of Absence Request: Aaron Miller shared that he has granted a leave of absence for one year for school psychologist, Brittney Waugh. The dates of her leave are August 29, 2017 through June 15, 2018.

WAUGH GRANTED A ONE YEAR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Melissa Zavales moved to approve the Superintendent's grant of a one year leave of absence for School Psychologist, Brittney Waugh. Stacey Pelster seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

Project Manager: Aaron Miller explained that the committee, consisting of 3 Board members (Brett, Susan and Stacey), a teacher, a community member as well as himself, scored the three proposals received. The committee recommends that Heery International be hired as the Project Manager. They received recommendations from Portland Public Schools, Beaverton and St. Helens School Districts. Initial letters have been sent to all three companies that submitted proposals explaining that the Board would make the final decision. Heery has a large enough staff that individuals would be dedicated to Vernonia. Their knowledge and skill background will meet the needs of our projects. Their completion of the bid response was amazing.

HEERY HIRED AS PROJECT MANAGER

Brittanie Roberts moved to approve the recommendation of the committee and authorize the Superintendent to develop a contract with Heery International as the district project manager. Katie Cook seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

WORKSHOP ADJOURNED at 3:08 p.m.

ADJOURNED

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

Board Chair

District Clerk

