

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J
475 BRIDGE STREET
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2009

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Kim Wallace. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board present:** Kim Wallace, Cari Levenseller, Greg Kintz, Tim Bamburg, Ernie Smith, Tammy Jennings, and Jim Krahn. BOARD PRESENT
- Staff present:** Ken Cox, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, High School Principal; Brent McClain, Middle School Principal; Aaron Miller, Elementary School Principal; Dawn Plews, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Tom Ramsey, Maintenance Supervisor; Gretchen Lindauer, Food Service Supervisor; Matt Blair, Randy Shockey, Juliet Safier, Cathy Ward, Ashley Rogers, Joanie Jones, Teri Willard, Justin Ward, and Kathy Pennington, teachers; and Jan Dyer, Karen Roberts, ElDonna Williams, Dana Hyde, Kathi Fetch, Doris Buchholz, and Cici Bell, Classified Staff; and Heidi Brown, School Nurse. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors present:** Bill Sword, Dick Titus, Wendy Hemmen, Matt Newman, Carol Cox, Kari Titus, Bob Gregg, Lola Gregg, Keith Cameron, Sara McMahan, Makayla Roach, Kelli Thompson, Mike Pihl, Bud Dow, Kinnell Steward, Rebecca McGaugh, Steve Wolf, Lisa Brewer, Penny Johnson, Angie Rhodes, Jack Lindsley, Jenie Lindsley, Laurie Taylor, Amy Cieloha, Dale Webb, Shelley Cota, Jill Hult, Katie Wilson, Dan Brown, Sarah Dupree, Jim Johnson, Tony Hyde, John Jackson, Clark McGaugh, Jim Tierney, Susan Wagner, Sammie Lindauer, Maggie Peyton, Sharon Bernal, Mike Fetch, Scott Laird, Don Webb, Don Normand, and others that names were not readable. VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** None AGENDA REVIEW
- 3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None AUDIENCE COMMENTS
- 4.0 CONSENT AGENDA:** CONSENT AGENDA
Tammy Jennings moved to approve and Jim Krahn seconded the consent agenda as presented.
- 4.1** Minutes of 02/12/09 Regular Meeting MINUTES APPROVED
Motion passed unanimously.
- 5.0 REPORTS & DISCUSSION**
- 5.1 Student Reports:** STUDENT REPORTS
- Middle School Students:** Sara McMahan, Makayla Roach, and Kelli Thompson
- Spirit week last week, dance well attended
 - Close up trip in April
 - State writing test just finished
- High School Student:** Sarah Dupree
- OSSOM program has just started
 - International Club up and going again – a lot of Foreign Exchange students this year
 - Spring Sports are underway
 - Student Council is pulling together and doing more organized activities
 - Spring Fling will be May 29
 - Honors English went to Ashland last week to see Shakespearean Plays
 - Band will be going to Disneyland over Spring break.

5.2 Building Reports:

BUILDING REPORTS

Washington Grade School: Principal Miller had nothing to add.
Kim Wallace asked when the Check and Connect program will begin. This program is part of PBS. Teachers will check in with students having behavioral issues or problems with PEER relationships. Mr. Miller indicated the program will start within the month.

Vernonia Middle School: Principal McClain thanked his students for coming and reporting. He had nothing else to add to his written report.
Kim Wallace asked how state testing is going. Mr. McClain stated that they have just finished round two of math testing. The students have three opportunities to pass. The third test will be given after Spring break.

Vernonia High School: Principal Underwood had nothing to add.
Greg Kintz asked if the workkeys testing is completed for classified staff? Yes with 100% passing.
Greg Kintz asked how is the High School doing in regards to student cell phone usage? Mr. Underwood indicated that they are exploring options of a total ban of cell phones. Currently phones are not allowed during instructional hours. Class time policy is "off and away."

5.3 Financial Report: Dawn Plews indicated that revenue sources are a moving target. She gets changes every day on cuts and where funding may come from. The financial reports were reviewed. There were no questions from the board.

FINANCIAL REPORT

5.4 Insurance Report: Ken Cox indicated that this has not changed from what was presented last month. He has spent time with our insurance agent and it looks like they still owe us \$516,000. \$1.7 will be the total in the bank once we receive the remaining amount owing. He is hoping to get word soon on when this will be arriving.

INSURANCE REPORT

6.0 INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

6.1 Budget Committee and Calendar Review: Community member Penny Johnson expressed interest in being on the budget committee at the end of the budget cycle last year. She is still interested. Her application was included in the board packet for the boards' consideration. The budget calendar was also included which is on the agenda to approve later.

BUDGET COMMITTEE
AND BUDGET
CALENDAR DISCUSSED

6.2 2008-09 Budget Cut Recommendation: Ken Cox explained that when the Governor first adjusted the budget our District's shortfall at that time was \$115,000. The Board chose to address this shortfall by taking the money from the District capital reserve fund. However, after the second forecast the District will need to cut an additional \$200,000. At the December, 2008 board meeting there was discussion about cutting days for students and staff. The District has had numerous snow days this year and at this point we have added back five days for students. There are still three snow days that will not be made up. The Board may need to consider cutting staff days. The District will save approximately \$22,000 per day. Dr. Cox recommends that the Board cut two days pay for all staff this year from days missed due to snow.

BUDGET CUT
RECOMMENDATION

Other districts will be cutting 20% from their 2009-10 budgets. If we were to follow this we'd need to cut \$1.2 million from next year's budget. Currently being discussed around the table with administration and staff are cuts totaling \$1 million.

6.3 Bond Estimate: Kim Wallace asked the Board for consensus in forming a committee made up of a community rep, a City rep, and two board reps. The committee will get together, look at information, and come up with an amount for a potential bond and bring it back to the board for their consideration.

BOND ESTIMATE

Jim Krahn asked what the process and timeline is if the District is looking at going out for a

bond in November, 2009? Ken Cox indicated that the filing deadline with the County is in August for a November election. Jim feels it is important to put an investment in the process. He feels a community based group would be beneficial.

Ken Cox clarified with Kim Wallace that the committee would be focused on determining an amount that the community would support in a bond. Correct.

Jim Krahn stated that this would be task #1 but then they would take it further and be the group that leads trying to get bond passed.

Ken Cox stated that the Oregon Solutions group is looking into a publicity campaign to help the District pass a bond.

The Board was in consensus of forming this committee.

- 6.4 Architectural Services Selection:** Ken Cox reported that the Beaverton School District helped the District in looking for architectural services. John Hartssock, program director for projects/construction for Beaverton School District, helped write the RFP. Jim Owens, development group at Beaverton helped to score the RFP's received. There were a total of seven people that read and scored each RFP. This included members of the community, staff, an architect and an engineer. The top three companies were interviewed yesterday. It was a unanimous decision of the selection committee to work with BOORA Architects of Portland. They were very enthusiastic, and talked about funding sources they have contacts with which will help us have one of the greenest schools in the nation.

ARCHITECTURAL
SERVICES SELECTION

- 6.5 2009-10 School Calendar:** Brent McClain reported that the calendar committee came up with calendar variations for next year. Labor Day starts late next year. The District traditionally starts after the Labor Day holiday but the committee also looked at starting before Labor Day.

The different options were given a three letter code. The codes are as follows;

- A: start after Labor Day
- B: start before Labor
- O: October exchange day for evening conferences
- N: November exchange day for evening conferences
- L: Long Winter break
- S: Short Winter break

36 staff members responded to the calendar options. No one voted for the two options containing a short winter break. The three options that stood out was AOL, ANL and BOL. Some of the feedback received was that starting before Labor Day would mean getting out earlier in June. However, by starting before the Labor Day holiday it would conflict with the State Fair and competing 4-H members.

Kim Wallace asked what the “*” at the bottom was referring to? This was an error in the rush to get printed.

All staff had the opportunity to comment although the notice to do so was short. The administration did not vote.

- 6.6 School Siting Discussion:** Chair Wallace reminded the audience that they have 3 minutes to speak as an individual and 5 minutes if speaking on behalf of a group. Audience comments were welcomed at this time.

SCHOOL SITING
DISCUSSION

Wendy Hemmen: She is a private land use / civil engineer in the State of Oregon and has had a chance to look at several of the sites being considered. She feels there is a grade challenge with the Boot Site. It is a very steep location to build schools. The hydrology of the fields is extremely wet. The hillside stability is also an issue. There are wetlands on site, from her

AUDIENCE COMMENTS
TAKEN

visual inspection. This could be difficult for permitting. She also feels the site is too small. She has looked at the Knott Street site and would like the board to consider it. The land is level, well drained, and the wetlands on site are minor and can be avoided. The site is basically shovel ready.

Matt Newman: He is a land use planner in Hillsboro. He is not suggesting that the District not use the Boot site, he is merely asking the Board to consider the Knott Street site. He has spoken with Jim Smejkal, the owner of the Knott Street site, in case costs escalate. He understands that the primary reason for not considering the Knott Street site is that it is zoned Light Industrial. As a back up he recommends that the City allow a code amendment to allow schools to be built in a Light Industrial zoning. He feels that the Board is trading distance cost.

Chair Wallace read questions from audience members that wished not to speak.

- What funds have been secured from the stimulus package from the Governor? Tony Hyde responded: Nothing. There are no promises. The Governor has publicly announced three projects he'd like to put the full weight of his office behind. Is there a big check, no. Do we have an edge, absolutely. The key to helping to unlock these funds is to announce a site.
- How much will the bond be that the District is going for in November? Ken Cox responded: The amount has not yet been determined as discussed earlier in the meeting. However, the amount will be the same regardless of where we end up; current site, boot site, etc.
- Do we have a plan B if a bond doesn't pass? Ken Cox responded: we are living Plan B. We would stay at our current site.
- Can we build a new school campus without outside dollars? Tony Hyde responded, no. No one will help us if we don't help ourselves.

Mike Pihl, community member representing himself and his kids. There is a saying going around "No kids, No Vernonia." He agrees with this. We need a site that is above the flood plain that is high enough that it can be utilized.

Bill Sword, community member. We can't predict high waters. It is upsetting to see houses still down in the mud and worrying about schools. On another note, there are cell phones that can fire bullets – be aware.

7.0 ACTION ITEMS

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| 7.1 | Budget Calendar: Cari Levenseller moved to approve the budget calendar as presented. Tim Bamburg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. | BUDGET CALENDAR
APPROVED |
| 7.2 | Budget Committee Member Appointment: Greg Kintz moved to appoint Penny Johnson to the budget committee. Motion seconded by Cari Levenseller. Motion passed unanimously. | PENNY JOHNSON
APPOINTED TO BUDGET
COMMITTEE |
| 7.3 | 2008-09 Budget Adjustment: The board asked for discussion. Tammy Jennings commented that saving \$22,000 per day is not coming near our shortfall this year. If only cutting two days where will the rest of the shortfall be made up from? Ken Cox stated that he took it from the Board's prior discussions to be mindful that everyone is suffering. Therefore the remaining shortfall would be adjusted at end of the year. The District would have to transfer money into the general fund to make up the difference. The Staff is continuing to save where they can and does not want to recommend more than two days. The District does have the authority to take four days. He talked to both VEA and OSEA and they | 2008-09 BUDGET
ADJUSTMENT
APPROVED |

understand the circumstances of the district. They are willing to meet the District half way by taking a cut of two days.

Kim Wallace commented that the last few years' snow days have not been made up. Tim Bamburg asked how many pay periods would this be spread over. Seven checks.

Jim Krahn moved to cut two days pay for all employees beginning with the March payroll as a cost savings measure for this year's budget. Motion seconded by Tammy Jennings.

Discussion: Ernie Smith, feels the financial pain as much as anyone, however the Board can't let emotions get involved. He feels the District must look at the bottom line. He can go along with the decision to cut two days but feels the District needs to continue to look at this.

Jim Krahn feels that Dr. Cox has spent a lot of time looking at this and he will rely on his recommendation.

There was no more discussion and Chair Wallace called for a vote:
Yes votes: Tammy Jennings, Jim Krahn, Ernie Smith, Tim Bamburg, Greg Kintz, and Cari Levenseller, No votes: Kim Wallace. Motion passed.

7.4 Award Contract for Architectural Services: Tim Bamburg moved to award a contact for Architectural Services to BOORA Architects. Motion seconded by Greg Kintz. ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES CONTRACT AWARDED

Discussion: Ernie Smith commented that he had the opportunity to look over all the proposals that came in. There were a lot of very exceptional proposals. Had the District selected any of the top three, he feels the District will be in good hands.

With no further discussion, Chair Wallace called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously.

7.5 2009-10 Academic Calendar: Cari Levenseller moved to adopt the 2009-10 calendar option AOL for next school year. Motion seconded by Tim Bamburg. Motion passed unanimously. 2009-10 ACADEMIC CALENDAR APPROVED

7.6 Preferred School Site: Jim Krahn moved to select the Boot site (as listed in the TGM study) as the first choice for a location for new schools and direct the Superintendent to proceed with negotiations for land acquisition and the necessary studies and permits. Motion seconded by Tammy Jennings. FUTURE SCHOOL SITE SELECTED

Discussion: Jim Krahn has had the privilege of attending a lot of the meetings regarding this process. The 20/20 group came up with three main citizen issues regarding the future of our schools.

- Out of the flood plain
- Schools be located as close as possible to center to town
- Students could walk and/or bike to school.

The Oregon Solutions process is an open, extensive and collaborative process that involves movers and shakers in the industry. This process went on for approximately one year. Jim attended a lot of meetings but only a portion compared to Jim Johnson, Bill Haack, and Tony Hyde. He feels it is our duty as citizens to provide an environment to educate our students. We must step forward or we have a problem in this community. The District has gone through the process and has had every expert available to help them. The board would be doing a dis-service to students and community to not move forward.

Tim Bamburg: Options are open regarding sites. This is the board's first choice.

Ernie Smith: Personally doesn't feel this will be the right site but has faith in the process. The

bottom line is that he wants new schools.

There was no further discussion. Chair Wallace called for a vote. Yes votes: Tammy Jennings, Jim Krahn, Tim Bamburg, Greg Kintz, Cari Levenseller, Kim Wallace. No Votes: Ernie Smith. Motion passed.

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT & BOARD COMMUNICATION CORRESPONDENCE: SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Cox updated the board on the following:

- An article entitled “Why Green” was distributed.
- Tom Ramsey, Maintenance Supervisor, was introduced and welcomed.
- VEF – working on tax exempt status.
- Oregon Solution will be realigning now that the first phase is over.
- VEA Negotiations will begin soon.
- Two bills have been put before the legislature. If passed they could provide \$140,000 to the district next year. The bills reference schools hit by natural disaster.
- Project Manager RFP will go out next week.

Jim Krahn mentioned that Senator Wyden will hold a Columbia County Town Hall this Sunday in the high school gym at 4:30 p.m. Tony Hyde indicated that the recently filmed documentary by the National Department of Education for PBS was a direct result from a letter that Senator Wyden sent to them. Vernonia will get national coverage thanks to him. Please plan on attending the town hall to say thank you.

(Note: the town hall was cancelled due to Senator Wyden having to be in Wash. DC)

9.0 RECESSED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION: 192.660 (2) (i) “To review and evaluate the performance of the chief executive officer or any other public officer, employee or staff member...” RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Present: Cari Levenseller, Greg Kintz, Tim Bamburg, Ernie Smith, Tammy Jennings, Jim Krahn, Ken Cox, Nate Underwood, Brent McClain, Aaron Miller, Barb Carr, and Rebecca McGaugh. (Chair Wallace went home ill).

Dr. Cox mentioned the confidentiality of the session.

Annual staff evaluations were conducted by each building administrator.

Dr. Cox excused himself from the meeting and the Board conducted the annual Superintendent evaluation.

10.0 RECONVENED TO REGULAR SESSION: at 8:51 p.m.

Tim Bamburg moved to approve Resolution 09-01 and 09-02. Motion seconded by Greg Kintz. Motion passed unanimously.

11.0 Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. ADJOURNED

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

Board Chair

District Clerk