

# MEETING MINUTES

## VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Regular Meeting – May 14, 2026 Vernonia Schools, 1000 Missouri Ave., Vernonia, OR 97064

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order 6:00 pm by Greg Kintz. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Greg Kintz, Tony Holmes, Lisa Curry, Alicia Mahoney, Amy Cieloha, and Joanie Jones. BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** Javoss McGuire BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary School Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Kendra Schlegel, Lee Costanzo, Rachel Brown, Brett Costley, Juliet Safier, Sena Wilmoth, Courtney Ferguson and Kristin Hansen, Licensed Staff; and Camrin Eyrick, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Scott Laird, Susan Wagner, Darla Waite-Larkin, Tim Larkin, Kellen Larkin, Lillian Larkin, Elam Cieloha, Charlotte Schlegel, Nova Gleason, Ryker Wood, Kate Nelson, Tiffany McTaggart, and virtually Billi Kohler, Aaron Bayer, Beth (last name not provided), Catherine (last name not provided), Pat Dutcher, Sharon (last name not provided), Brandi (last name not provided), and Traci Wolf. VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Greg Kintz shared adjustments to the agenda: AGENDA REVIEW
- 5.0 Audience Comments will be moved to 2.1
- 2.2 Action to approve the agenda
- 10.6 Action to approve the hiring of and awarding a contract to the new Superintendent
- Amy Cieloha moved to approve the agenda as amended. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.
- 2.1 AUDIENCE COMMENTS:** Elam Cieloha, VHS Student, addressed the Board about senate bill 664 which requires school districts across Oregon to provide instruction about the Holocaust and genocide in social studies classes starting in the 2020-21 school year. AUDIENCE COMMENTS
- Sena Wilmoth, Mist 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, spoke in support of the slow expansion of Mist Elementary.
- 3.0 RECESS to BUDGET MEETING** at: 6:12 p.m. MEETING RECESSED
- 4.0 RETURN TO BOARD MEETING:** at 6:56 p.m. MEETING RECONVENED
- 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT:** Moved to 2.1. PUBLIC COMMENT
- 6.0 SHOWING CASING of SCHOOLS**
- 6.1 Administrative Reports:** Administrator reports were provided to the Board prior to the meeting. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS
- Michelle Eagleson shared that both classrooms at Mist went through various scenarios and reviewed the Standard Response Protocols. Evacuation, depending on the scenario, would be to the back field or to the house north of the school. Law enforcement and the fire department are aware. A reunification meeting place discussion still needs to occur. STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOLS REVIEWED WITH MIST STAFF
- Mrs. Eagleson further shared that working with the ESD on “Math Fruit Salad” has given the students more confidence and they are making bigger gains. She looks forward to continuing this work with the ESD next year. YES WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH ESD ON MATH TECHNIQUES NEXT YEAR
- Rachel Brown, in Mr. Underwood’s absence, introduced students to provide reports to the Board.

Nova Gleason, Ryker Wood, and Kate Nelson shared recent activities with the Criminal Justice Class taught by Rachel Brown. Charlotte Schlegel provided the Leadership report highlighting athletics and the recent collaboration with Clatskanie and Gaston High School Leadership teams.

The Leadership Team shared the results of a recent student survey they conducted to gather data from high school students about their experience in school. 81 students in grades 9-12 completed the survey. Overall survey results showed that the biggest challenge students face is worrying about their grades (65%) followed by feeling interested in class (46%) and mental health challenges (30%). With all students worrying about their grades, the survey showed that 9<sup>th</sup> grade students expressed the highest level of worry, while 12<sup>th</sup> graders had the highest mental health concerns. The survey revealed that bullying is not an issue in the school. In an effort to support the students in these areas of concern, next year they want to establish a girls' mental health group. There is already a successful boys' group. They would also like to try Power Hour tutoring, 2 days a week, that would partner upper classmen with freshmen.

LEADERSHIP REPORT PROVIDES SURVEY RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS

The topic of college and career readiness and scholarship support was brought up by the Board. Concerns were noted that there hadn't been enough oversight from administration to provide support as well as there being a disconnect with communication which was frustrating for students.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS CONCERNS SHARED

**6.1.1 Staff Update:** Noted below in Superintendent Report

STAFF UPDATE

## 7.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:

**7.1 Superintendent Report:** The superintendent report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Jim Helmen highlighted the following:

- Teacher Appreciation week was held the first week of May.
- Summer Learning Grant has been awarded to VSD. Hiring for this summer program, starting in July, will begin in a couple weeks.
- Mist Expansion of adding an additional teacher at this time is on hold however, enrollment will increase with the two existing classrooms.
- Smarter Balance testing is going well. Teachers have done a great job preparing students.
- Instructional Calendar proposal. Administration will have to be intentional when looking at the student hours requirement as the ability to utilize students conferences and professional development is being taken away.
- New Staff Hire: Abby Welter has been hired as the new MS & HS Counselor for 2026-27. Deborah Johnston has been hired as Maintenance Supervisor effective July 1, 2026.

**7.1.1 Collective Bargaining Negotiations Update:** Jim Helmen shared that they have held two meetings. He shared that the 150-day mediation clock starts at the first meeting. Mediation could take place if needed after October 3, 2026.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UPDATE

**7.1.2 Mist Elementary School Expansion Update:** Jim Helmen shared this during the Superintendent Report.

MIST ELEMENTARY EXPANSION UPDATE

**7.2 Financial Report:** Marie Knight shared her financial report which has incorporated the latest State School Fund (SSF) estimates. Currently the ending fund balance is \$160,000. The May SSF payment just came in this week but is not included in this packet. The District is not required to pay anything back so the full payment plus a little extra was received.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Amy Cieloha questioned the use of the funds in the senior class student body account. Marie shared that there is language in the Student Body Handbook that outlines that the students in that class determine where they'd like remaining class funds to be used.

**7.3 Maintenance Report:** Mark Brown's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Alicia Mahoney asked about getting a quote for bathroom stalls initially requested in March. Jim Helmen stated he would get this. He also confirmed that a new mower was purchased and is being used.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

**8.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:**

**8.1 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**8.1.1 Safety Committee:** Amy Cieloha reported that at the recent safety committee meeting they discussed:

- The issue of students parking up at the shop
- The large amount of people that are driving back to the baseball and softball fields instead of parking in the parking lot.
- A recent PACE inspection walk through was conducted.
- Having to relocate the Jacob Levenseller memorial plaque by the swing sets as it is a tripping hazard.
- Frosted windows could be an issue. One way to resolve this is to create a small area to be able to see into and then cover this small space when going into a lockdown.

**8.1.2 Policy Committee:** Updates are being presented as a first reading.

**8.1.3 Scholarship Committee:** Committee members were given a packet of applications to review. The committee will set a meeting to discuss and make their selection of scholarship winners.

COMMITTEE REPORTS  
SAFETY COMMITTEE

POLICY COMMITTEE  
SCHOLARSHIP  
COMMITTEE

**8.2 Board Member Resignation:** Greg Kintz shared that Javoss McGuire has been absent lately due to temporarily working out of state. He initially hoped he could make it work but wasn't able to. His resignation is provided.

BOARD MEMBER  
RESIGNATION RECEIVED

**8.2.1 Replacement Timeline Discussion:** The Board discussed posting the vacancy for two weeks and appointing at the June or July meeting.

BOARD VACANCY  
REPLACEMENT  
TIMELINE

**9.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION**

OTHER INFORMATION

**9.1 2026-27 Instructional Calendar:** Brett Costley provided input into the calendar. He isn't on the committee but the teachers are unanimously in support of the previous calendar options of starting prior to Labor Day. Lee Costanzo was in agreement.

2026-27 INSTRUCTIONAL  
CALENDAR DISCUSSED

Tony Holmes shared concerns over the heat in the SLC rooms which are south facing and unable to open the windows.

**9.2 2026-27 Fee Schedule:** Marie Knight shared the slight increase proposed to the food service fees is due to the District being required to have established meal prices close to the Free/Reduced meal rates. The District is still participating in the free meals for all program.

2026-27 FEE SCHEDULE  
DISCUSSED

**9.3 Policy Updates:** The following policies were presented as a first reading.

POLICY UPDATES – 1<sup>st</sup>  
READING

**9.3.1** BFCA – Administrative Regulations (AR)

**9.3.2** BFE – Administration in the Absence of Policy

**9.3.3** BHE – Board Member Liability Insurance

**9.3.4** EDC/KGF – Authorized Use of District Equipment and Materials

**9.3.5** KG – Community Use of District Facilities (ver.2)

**9.3.6** KG-AR – Community Use of District Facilities

**9.3.7** KH – Public Gifts to the District

**9.3.8** KN – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies

**9.3.9** KN-AR – Relations with Law enforcement Agencies

**9.4 New Superintendent Contract:** Greg Kintz, who was appointed by the Board to negotiate the new superintendent contract, shared that there was only one language suggested change offered by the District attorney. Nothing has changed from what was discussed at the board's previous meeting.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT  
CONTRACT

**10.0 ACTION ITEMS:**

**10.1 Board Member Resignation:** Lisa Curry moved to accept the resignation of board member Javoss McGuire effective immediately and declare a vacancy. Amy Cieloha seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.

McGUIRE RESIGNS FROM  
BOARD

- 10.2 Board Vacancy Timeline:** Alicia Mahoney moved to set the board vacancy timeline as discussed in item 8.2.1, closing the posting at the end of May. Tony Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. BOARD VACANCY TIMELINE APPROVED
- 10.3 2026-27 Instructional Calendar:** Lisa Curry moved to approve the 2026-27 Instructional Calendar Option A as discussed. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. 2026-27 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR APPROVED
- 10.4 2026-27 Fee Schedule:** Amy Cieloha moved to approve the 2026-27 Fee Schedule as presented. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. 2026-27 FEE SCHEDULE APPROVED
- 10.5 New Hire:** Alicia Mahoney moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to hire Abby Welter, MS/HS counselor. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Lisa Curry abstained from voting. No reason for the abstention was provided. Motion passed with Greg Kintz, Amy Cieloha, Joanie Jones, Tony Holmes and Alicia Mahoney voting yes. WELTER HIRED AS MS/HS COUNSELOR
- 10.6 New Superintendent Contract:** Tony Holmes moved to approve a 3-year superintendent contract for Darla Waite-Larkin to begin on July 1, 2026. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. WAITE-LARKIN SUPT CONTRACT APPROVED
- 11.0 MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** Greg Kintz reminded the board that the OSBA July summer board conference will be held in Redmond on the 10<sup>th</sup> and then again in Eugene on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Rural schools have some scholarships if anyone wants to go. Please let Greg know immediately if interested. BOARD PERFORMANCE
- 12.0 CONSENT AGENDA:** CONSENT AGENDA
- 12.1** Minutes of 04/09/2026 Regular Meeting and the 04/15/2026, 04/18/2026, 04/20/2026 and 05/01/2026 Special Meeting.
- Lisa Curry moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED
- 13.0 OTHER ISSUES:** OTHER ISSUES
- 13.1** Joanie Jones volunteered to join the next agenda setting meeting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
- A request was made to have an update on Senate Bill 664 at the next meeting.
- Graduation and the Board's involvement in the ceremony was discussed.
- Lisa Curry shared her disappointment that she is not able to sign a contract for the Boosters to get underway with the Stadium Project due to last minute requirements.
- 14.0 MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:42 p.m. ADJOURNED

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

Board Chair

District Clerk