

# MEETING MINUTES

## VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT Budget Committee Meeting - April 23, 2026 Vernonia Schools Library, 1000 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A meeting of the Budget Committee of Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Greg Kintz. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Budget Committee Present:** Lisa Curry, Susan Wagner, Alicia Mahoney, Joanie Jones, Scott Laird, Billi Kohler, Greg Kintz and Amy Cieloha who joined at 6:43 p.m. COMMITTEE PRESENT
- Budget Committee Absent:** Javoss McGuire and Tony Holmes COMMITTEE ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent, Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Kendra Schlegel and Brett Costley, Licensed Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Tiffany McTaggart VISITORS PRESENT
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 2.0 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:** Committee members introduced themselves. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
- 3.0 ELECTION of BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Scott Laird nominated Lisa Curry. as Budget Committee Chair. Alicia Mahoney seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and the Chair called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. CURRY APPOINTED AS BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIR
- 4.0 ELECTION of BUDGET COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR:** Scott Laird nominated Alicia Mahoney for Vice Chair. Joanie Jones seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and the Chair called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. MAHONEY APPOINTED AS BUDGET COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR
- 5.0 BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES:** Greg Kintz moved to approve the Budget Committee minutes from 05/08/2025 as presented. Billi Kohler seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. MINUTES APPROVED
- 6.0 DISCUSSION of BUDGET GOALS:** Jim Helmen read the budget goals as printed in the Proposed Budget document. BUDGET GOALS SHARED
- 7.0 PRESENTATION of BUDGET MESSAGE:** Jim Helmen read aloud his Budget Message. He shared a summary document to help the committee understand the budget document. BUDGET MESSAGE READ  
BUDGET SUMMARY  
PRESENTED

Mr. Helmen noted that there is flexibility within the budget but only within the programs being offered. 68% of the budget is tied to salary and staff benefits. He explained about students that are weighted with additional funding. The two major areas of weighted funding include up to 11% of our total enrollment in Special Education (SpEd) and English Language Learners (ELL). These two programs require additional and specific staffing. For SpEd students above the 11% the district is responsible for fulling supporting them without the additional weighted funding. These costs are absorbed by the district's general fund.

Mr. Helmen further explained that the district keeps a close eye on enrollment trends and makes adjustments to our anticipated enrollment every quarter. The district is projecting 583 students next year which is where we started the year this year, however, the budget is developed with a student population of 554, where we ended this year, to be conservative. Enrollment matters. Ten students increased or decreased is funding for a teacher. The State looks at our enrollment from the previous year to establish the next year's funding.

The 2026-27 budget is developed with a ratio of 30 students per 1 teacher. This is a significant different for our district. We've been able to financially support smaller class sizes in the past but this is no longer an option with the current level of state funding. This ratio means the district will not have to make additional staffing reductions in addition to those that occurred last Fall.

**BUDGET DOCUMENT REVIEW:**

Jim Helmen and Marie Knight went through the budget document highlighting a variety of funds and functions.

**BUDGET DOCUMENT OVERVIEW**

Each fund has a resources (revenue) page and a requirements (expenditures) page. All funds are set up the same way. Fund 100 is the general fund. Fund 200 is special revenue funds. Fund 300 is Debt Service.

Marie Knight shared documents to assist the committee with navigating the budget document. Information regarding how to review the budget document, fund definitions, and an expense summary document was shared. Marie will email the committee tomorrow with a link to a shared Google document. The committee members were asked to log any questions they have on this shared document. It was noted that it is helpful if a page number is referenced with each question. She or Mr. Helmen will answer these questions on this shared document. All committee members will see all questions asked and all responses provided. Please log any questions by May 10<sup>th</sup>. This will give adequate time to respond prior to the next meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.


**9.0 NEXT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:** May 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

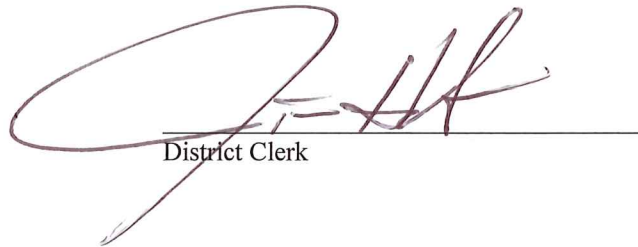
**NEXT MEETING**

**10.0 ADJOURN:** Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

**ADJOURN**

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

  
Budget Committee Chair

  
District Clerk