

# MEETING MINUTES

## VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Regular Meeting – April 9, 2026 Mist Elementary School, 69163 Hwy 47, Mist

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Greg Kintz, Board Chair. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Greg Kintz, Joanie Jones, Amy Cieloha, Lisa Curry, Alicia Mahoney, and Tony Holmes. BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** Javoss McGuire BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Kendra Schlegel, Brett Costley, Courtney Ferguson and Tabatha Groshong, Licensed Staff; and Karen Roberts, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Scott Laird, Rob Hess, Beth Kintz, John (last name unknown), and one unnamed individual. VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Greg Kintz shared the following additions to the agenda: AGENDA REVIEW
- 5.2.1 - Budget Committee Application Review
- 8.4 - Budget Committee Appointment
- Lisa Curry moved to approve the agenda as amended. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.
- 3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA and NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** PUBLIC COMMENT
- Brett Costley, spoke to the layoffs that occurred last October, sharing that students and staff were significantly impacted.
- 4.0 SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS**
- 4.1 Administrator Reports:** All Administrator reports were provided to the Board prior to the meeting. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS
- Joanie Jones asked Michelle Eagleson to talk about the elementary reading incentives. Mrs. Eagleson shared that VES and MES are partnering with the Masonic Lodge in Clatskanie with a reading campaign called Wheels for Books. As students read books their names will be put into a drawing. Two students at Mist and four at Vernonia Elementary will have a chance to win from a drawing held in May. Winners will be able to choose a bike or scooter. They are also partnering with Four Stags Pizza in Vernonia, which gives students pizza rewards for reading every month. Lisa Curry shared that she still has safety gear left over from the grand opening of the Vernonia Skate Park that she could donate to the Masonic Lodge. DISCUSSION ON ELEM. READING INCENTIVES
- Amy Cieloha asked about the upcoming townhall to be held in a couple weeks at Mist. Jim Helmen shared that he's been working with Michelle Eagleson and Kendra Schlegel and looking at options to expand enrollment at Mist Elementary. Historically there has been more students enrolled at Mist than in recent years. In looking at the District's overall elementary enrollment, expanding to a third classroom at Mist, would help to alleviate high class numbers in Vernonia and potentially keep from having blended classrooms. There is a financial impact to increasing enrollment at Mist as those students receive additional ADM funding for attending a rural school. It was noted that any additional ADM funding would not come to the District until the following year. Holding the townhall and gathering community input will assist in the final decision. It was suggested to also hold an online version for people to be able to provide input that cannot attend in person. Mr. Helmen agreed this was a good idea. Discussion was held on the building sustainability with additional students. Joanie Jones feels the school is definitely an asset to the community. DISCUSSION ON UPCOMING TOWNHALL REGARDING POSSIBLE MIST EXPANSION

Tony Holmes asked when the elementary is doing a fundraiser, can someone donate directly to the school? Yes. Donors just need to identify which fundraiser they are supporting. FUNDRAISING DONATION QUESTION

Michelle Eagleson shared that she and Kendra Schlegel will be presenting at the ORTI conference next week. She is excited to go brag about our students and staff. ORTI PRESENTATION UPCOMING

**4.1.1 Out of State Travel Request 2026-27:** It was noted in Mr. Underwood's Principal Report that he is asking the Board to consider out of state travel next school year for the high school Germany trip, the Senior trip to Disneyland, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington, DC. OUT OF STATE TRAVEL FOR 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

**5.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:**

**5.1 Superintendent Report:** The Superintendent report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Jim Helmen shared that he is still waiting to hear back from the VEA and the OSEA about dates for a meeting to begin contract negotiations with each bargaining group. He has met with board members Greg Kintz and Lisa Curry and the District is ready to go as soon as meeting dates can be set. UNION NEGOTIATIONS DATES NOT SET

Joanie Jones asked about the Summer Learning Grant. Jim Helmen shared that the District has not yet heard back if we were successful in obtaining the competitive grant. If the District does receive the grant things will run very similarly to last summer with K-12 enrichment opportunities, as well as credit recovery options for high school. Were there any discussions at the end of the year last year about how things went and what might need to be adjusted for this summer's program? According to Mr. Helmen, no they did not have those conversations. Mr. Helmen also shared that transportation was provided last year. SUMMER LEARNING GRANT / SUMMER SCHOOL

Dates for potential summer school will be set once the grant has been awarded. It was noted that Vacation Bible School in Vernonia is already set for June 22-25.

The Summer Meals program will be taking place this summer. Discussion was held on the requirements from ODE around how meals are served and who can pick them up. SUMMER MEALS WILL TAKE PLACE

Jim Helmen shared his transition plan at the last meeting and asked if the Board had any questions. Greg Kintz indicated that this is important as the District needs to continue to move forward until Mr. Helmen leaves on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Helmen stated he desires to have things lined out and in place for the incoming Superintendent to be able to hit the ground running. SUPERINTENDENT TRANSITION TIMELINE

Jim Helmen will participate and assist with the hiring of a new Business Manager and a Maintenance Supervisor. Both of these positions will be vacant at the end of the year. He will leave the decision on what the Special Education / Student Services position looks like and the hiring of that position for the new incoming Superintendent.

Amy Cieloha asked for clarification on the status of the College and Career Readiness position that was part of the licensed staff reductions in force last Fall. Jim Helmen shared that the District initially planned to post this position as a classified position but determined there was still a lack in funding to support this position. He held discussion with MS/HS Principal Nate Underwood and counselor Peter Weisel and looked at historically how this position has been filled, they felt the duties of this position could be covered with current staff on a temporary basis. Administration and leadership team has looked at our budget and identified priorities for next year. They determined the College and Career Readiness position is needed for student support, scholarships and help with research papers. The position will look differently next year depending on who is hired but the added responsibilities currently on the teachers will go away. CLARIFICATION ON THE COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS POSITION

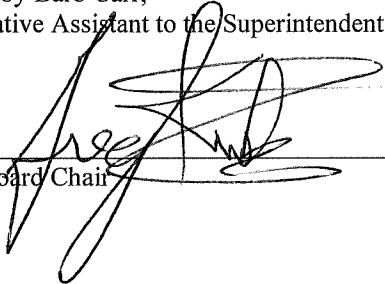
**5.2 Financial Report:** The financial report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Marie Knight shared that the financials are not showing a big swing in the ending fund balance. Her estimated ending fund balance is at \$164,993. It was noted that this month's financial report was created earlier in the month of March due to Spring Break. Therefore, some March transactions may not be recorded. FINANCIAL REPORT

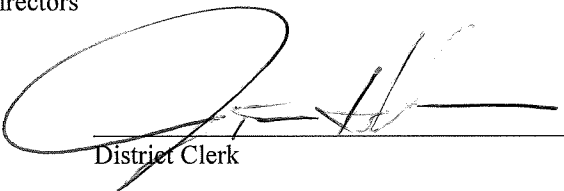
<p>She has been working on the 2026-27 budget and is nearly finished. The official document is very detailed which at times can be confusing, but that level of detail is a requirement She is currently looking at different report to make the information easier to read.</p>	<p>BUDGET IN PROGRESS</p>
<p>Clarification was asked regarding fundraising by a VHS class. If there is money left over does it stay with the Class? Yes.</p>	<p>CLASS FUNDRAISING QUESTION</p>
<p>Discussion was held on the need for monthly conversations to take place with the Athletic Directors to monitor what money they have available and to address the needs. It is their responsibility to make sure the money is followed. Alicia Mahoney offered the name of an individual that supports the Logging Show that could assist with equipment for needed tasks. Due to his current level of support in the community there may be an opportunity for the District to receive some assistance.</p>	<p>ATHLETIC BUDGET &amp; OVERSIGHT DISCUSSED</p>
<p><b>5.2.1 Budget Committee Application:</b> An application was received for the Budget Committee from Susan Wagner. The Board reviewed her application for consideration.</p>	<p>BUDGET COMMITTEE APPLICATION RECEIVED</p>
<p><b>5.3 Maintenance Report:</b> Mark Brown's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. The electrical drop downs have not yet been installed in the shop. The sink needs a part machined to fit accurately and Mark is going to talk with Mr. Costanzo.</p>	<p>MAINTENANCE REPORT</p>
<p>Joanie Jones shared a comment regarding the Mist Gym floor surface wearing down. The finish doesn't appear to be heavy duty.</p>	
<p>Jim Helmen offered to follow up with Mark Brown regarding a rotation of refinishing the gym floors as well as if a quote was obtained for the bathroom stalls.</p>	
<p><b>5.3.1 Mist Elementary Maintenance Update:</b> Jim Helmen shared that currently 10 hours per week are available for Mist custodial / maintenance work, which is not sustainable. Mr. Helmen stated they are looking at what changes can be done for next year. He noted that the fences will be power washed over Spring break. Joanie Jones offered to help.</p>	<p>MIST MAINTENANCE UPDATE</p>
<p><b>6.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:</b></p>	
<p><b>6.1 Committee Reports:</b></p>	
<p><b>6.1.1 Policy Committee:</b> Jim Helmen is reviewing policies. The next committee meeting is April 16<sup>th</sup>.</p>	<p>COMMITTEE REPORTS POLICY COMMITTEE</p>
<p><b>6.1.2 Safety Committee:</b> Nothing reported</p>	<p>SAFETY COMMITTEE</p>
<p><b>6.1.3 Scholarship Committee:</b> Amy Cieloha shared that senior students received the inaccurate version of the Board scholarship descriptions. She mentioned that only a few scholarships have been provided to the students. She expressed her disappointment.</p>	<p>SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE</p>
<p><b>Scholarship Committee Fundraiser Option Discussion:</b> The Board was asked to keep thinking about options. Having coffee available to parents in the school drop off line was suggested.</p>	<p>SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISING OPTIONS</p>
<p><b>70 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION</b></p>	
<p><b>7.1 2026-27 Instructional Calendar Options:</b> Two options were presented for consideration of approval.. The main difference between the two options is that option A has a teacher work day at the conclusion of winter break and option B has the teacher work day at the conclusion of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. Both options have school starting prior to Labor Day.</p>	<p>2026-27 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR OPTIONS DISCUSSED</p>
<p>Board members expressed their concern about the early start stating heat as an issue in the building at that time of year, as well as families still participating in summer vacation activities until Labor Day. There was not support for the options presented and the Board asked that the committee revise the calendar and bring it back at the May meeting for adoption.</p>	
<p><b>7.2 Superintendent Search Committee and Finalist Day Schedule Discussion:</b> Staff and community have volunteered to participate in the process of searching for a new Superintendent. A list of names was shared with the board. Barb Carr will work to finalize the committee structure and put together the Finalist Day schedule. Rob Hess with GLS shared that ss of this meeting 14 applications have been received and over 100 responses to the qualifications survey have come in.</p>	<p>SUPT SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE</p>

**8.0 ACTION ITEMS**

- 8.1 2026-27 Instructional Calendar:** Alicia Mahoney moved to table the 2026-27 Instructional Calendar Option until the next board meeting as discussed. Tony Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. 2027-27 INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR TABLED UNTIL NEXT MONTH
- 8.2 Appoint Superintendent Search Committee Members:** Lisa Curry moved to appoint members to the Superintendent Search Committees as discussed in item 7.2 Tony Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. SUPT. SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS APPOINTED
- 8.3 2026-27 Out of State Travel:** Alicia Mahoney moved to approve out of state travel for 2026-27 to Wash. DC, Disneyland, and Germany. Lisa Curry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. 2026-27 OUT OF STATE TRAVEL APPROVED
- 8.4 Budget Committee Appointment:** Amy Cieloha moved to appoint Susan Wagner to a three-year term on the Budget Committee effective for 26-27 budget season. Tony Holmes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. WAGNER APPOINTED TO A THREE-YEAR TERM ON THE BUDGET COMMITTEE
- 9.0 MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** The Board shared their appreciation to Greg Kintz for his work on behalf of the Board. MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE
- 10.0 CONSENT AGENDA:** CONSENT AGENDA
- 10.1** Minutes of 03/12/2026 Regular Meeting and the 03/18/2026 Special Meeting. Joanie Jones moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED
- 11.0 OTHER ISSUES:** Next Agenda Setting Meeting – Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Amy Cieloha volunteered to join Jim Helmen and Greg Kintz. OTHER ISSUES
- 12.0 UPCOMING DATES:** UPCOMING DATES
- April 15, 2026 - Special Board Meeting – 5:30 p.m.  
April 18, 2026 – Special Board Meeting- 9:00 a.m.  
April 20, 2026 – Special Board Meeting – 6:00 p.m.  
April 23, 2026 – Budget Committee Meeting – 6:00 p.m.  
April 29, 2026 – Mist Community Meeting 6-7 pm  
May 1, 2026 – Special Board Meeting – time T.B.A.
- 13.0 MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:25 p.m. ADJOURNED

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

  
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Board Chair

  
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District Clerk