

# MEETING MINUTES

## VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Regular Meeting – June 9, 2022 Vernonia Schools Library, 1000 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A Regular Meeting of the Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Stacey Pelster. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, Scott Rickard, Javoss McGuire, Greg Kintz, Amy Cieloha, and Joanie Jones. BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** None BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Aaron Miller, Superintendent; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Nate Underwood, MS/HS Principal; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Rachel Wilson, K-12 Vice Principal; Susanne Myers, Special Education Director; Gordon Jarman, Athletic Director; Allison McLeod, Kendra Schlegel, Juliet Safier, and Rachel Brown, Licensed Staff; Camrin Eyrrick, Karen Roberts, Summer Gonzales, Jessica Kintz, Liz White, and Jana Titus, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Kelly Murphy-Shaw, Janice McGuire, Aaron Kraus, Liana Kraus, Hannah Kraus, Karin Lehman, Tasia Kyser, Alexis LaBelle, Andrew LaBelle, Ryan Haddox, Stephanie Borst, Ingrid Cota, Myra Tovey, Christine Kintz, Dannielle Forrest, Thomas Jones, Brittanie Roberts, Jim Helmen, Scott Laird, and Dale Webb, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Ms. McLeod & Ms. White's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class led the pledge and sang America, The Beautiful. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Scott Rickard moved to approve the agenda as presented. Greg Kintz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. AGENDA REVIEW
- 3.0 RECESS to BUDGET HEARING:** The regular meeting was recessed to go into the Budget Hearing at 6:04 p.m. RECESS to BUDGET HEARING
- Aaron Miller shared that the Budget Committee approved the 2022-23 budget at the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting sending it to the School Board for adoption at this meeting.
- The public is allowed to provide testimony and the public hearing was opened for comment. No comment was given, therefore the hearing closed.
- 4.0 RETURN to REGULAR SESSION:** The regular meeting reconvened at 6:06 p.m. REGULAR MEETING RECONVENED
- 5.0 SHOWCASING OF SCHOOLS:**
- 5.1 Student Reports:** No report given.
- 5.2 Principal Reports:**  
Mrs. Eagleson reported:
- Student of the Month final assembly will be held on the last day of school.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students will have their move-up assembly on the last day of school. Student go upstairs to the middle school wing and meet the middle school teachers.
  - A Mad Scientist recently put on a great assembly. Thanks to Ms. Ferguson, VFA, who worked hard to secure the grant which provided the assembly. STEAM kits from OMSI have been secured for next year as well.
  - Musical Artist, Mo Phillips, performed for elementary students this week.
  - A day of fun activities with kids will be held on June 17th. Teachers will each plan an activity.
  - Statewide assessments are complete.
  - Staff PLC groups are continuing to look at ways to improve school climate and culture for next year.
  - Staff are finishing up analyzing reading data and because of the lateness of testing,

the data is not ready to share with the Board at this meeting. It will be shared in August or September.

- The recently held STEAM night, was amazing. It was held in conjunction with the Salmon Auction. They plan to partner with this group again in the future.

Nate Underwood:

- The recently held Senior Scholarship Night was well attended. The community of Vernonia was very generous, providing a large amount of scholarship dollars. Mr. Underwood thanked all for the support.
- The annual Grad Walk was held today. This has become a great tradition of our graduates as well as the younger kids to see what's in their future.
- Graduation is this Saturday at noon. There are 51 graduates in the Class of 2022, 48 are choosing to walk. Graduates include students on campus, part of VFA, and foreign exchange students. Gift bags will be available for each graduate.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion will be next Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.
- Students were rewarded academically and athletically at the Principal Awards assembly
- Kudos to Ms. Keister and the Theater Arts Class for their performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Student assessments are complete
- VHS recently went through an accreditation review. People were on site to observe and review the high school. Suggestions for improvement were given and according to Mr. Underwood these will be addressed by the end of next year.

MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL REPORT

**5.3 Spring Sports Report:** Gordon Jarman reported. Spring was a trying season but successes were had by all. Currently a lot of hard work is going on to better the teams for next year.

SPRING SPORTS REPORT

- Middle School Track had a light turnout but quality athletes. The middle school competes in the Columbia Pacific League which includes surrounding schools regardless of size. Vernonia is the smallest school. Ten Vernonia athletes went to the league meet and 4 placed.
- High School Track had a great season. Two girls and one boy placed at State
- Baseball played well but missed getting to state.
- Softball finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the League but did not make it to State.

**6.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Janice McGuire, parent, spoke on behalf of the recent political stance taken by students inside the halls of the school. She stated that the highly politicized posters that were brought into the school caused some students to feel bullied. She would like to see a safe and non-biased policy going forward.

Aaron Krause, parent of elementary student, requested that a committee be convened to improve school security and safety. The committee needs to conduct a complete review of district policy and procedures, improvement to address deficiencies, reinstatement of armed and sworn SRO, barricades, create a single entry point, and have clear and concise lines of communication with local law enforcement. Action must be taken at the local level to get anything done. For security of students and staff please do not debate endlessly over funding.

**7.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:**

**7.1 Superintendent Report:** Mr. Miller gave his final report as Superintendent of Vernonia School District.

SUPERINTENDENT  
REPORT

The recent issue of *The Ruralite* had a great article titled "*The Little School House that Could*" about Mist Elementary with story and photos by Scott Laird. Things are wrapping up with a solid end to a trying and difficult year. Mr. Miller shared his State of the Union address highlighting all that has happened during the last 8 years when he served as Superintendent.

FINAL STATE OF THE  
UNION ADDRESS

- Took over as Superintendent/Elem Principal in 2014. After a few years the Principal part went away. Separating the positions allowed for increased focus and was a positive move.

- Staff numbers have increased. Teachers and instructional assistants have been added equating to lower class sizes and more electives at the middle and high school.
- Calendar days have been added back over the years. More additions are still needed.
- The 2007 flood recovery was still impacting the District annually when he became Superintendent. A \$400,000 annual payment was being paid towards the District's \$5 million debt. This debt was incurred when the fundraising and state funding dried up and was necessary to complete the school and open the doors in 2012. In 2017 the District went out for a bond to complete the campus and retire the debt. The bond passed and the annual debt payment was eliminated. The District was able to finally finish the campus – adding the art room, the football field and track, the CTE buildings, updating security, improving the sound system in the gym, and completing numerous upgrades to Mist Elementary. The remaining dollars after all bond projects were completed laid the ground work for excavation for the community fundraised football field nack shack. Fundraising for this project is on-going.
- The District's financial position strengthened, going from a low ending fund balance and heavy financial stressors, to currently having a budget that is at an industry standard ending fund balance, and a pathway out to make ESSER fund dollars sustainable in the future. The District is in a good place. There is still work that needs to be addressed in the area of staff salaries as ours are still below neighboring Districts. Going forward, focus on steady growth that sustains the budget.
- Options offered to students has increased with the Vernonia Family Academy and other alternative options.
- Grant management was a focus; SIA, ESSER and Measure 98. The CTE woodshop, welding/metals shop were constructed and the forestry program is coming back. There have been meetings with MBFD discussing the possibility of a CTE Fire Science program.
- Overall his main focus was working with staff on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and a heightened awareness of trauma and how it impacts students and staff.

Mr. Miller concluded by saying that throughout his career he tried to address every issue putting students first and his staff second.

- 7.2 Financial Report:** Marie Knight shared that there is not much change from last month's financial report. She is working on getting grants claimed and balance., FINANCIAL REPORT
- 7.2.1 Resolution #2022-03 Adopt the 2022-23 Budget:** Marie Knight explained that this resolution outlines the amounts for each fund and fund type. She indicated that when making the motion to approve this resolution the full motion needs to include the amounts listed by fund. This resolution formally adopts the 2022-23 budget for the District RESOLUTION TO ADOPT 2022-23 BUDGET EXPLAINED
- 7.2.2 Resolution #2022-04 Adopt & Appropriate Supplemental Budget and to Transfer Appropriations within Funds of the 2021-22 Budget:** Marie Knight explained that this resolution adopts a supplemental budget for the current year. Each year at the end of the year if the District received or spent more money than what was budgeted, a supplemental budget needs to be adopted. In this instance budgeted amounts in instruction was higher than needed and lower than needed in support services This is a common action at the end of each year and is a requirement in school budgeting. RESOLUTION TO ADOPT 2021-22 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET EXPLAINED
- 7.3 Maintenance Report:** Mark Brown did not provide a report this month. MAINTENANCE REPORT
- 8.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:**
- 8.1 Committee Reports:** Susan Wagner shared that the District Safety Committee continues to work hard. She also attended a Talented and Gifted (TAG) committee meeting. Their focus is to make sure the students that need services will receive them. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

The question was raised about what benefits there would be to students, staff, and administration if

there was board member presence at events, assemblies and or athletic games? Stacey Pelster indicated that it is always better to see things in person as opposed to hearing about them with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party report at a meeting. This topic will be discussed at a future time.

**9.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION**

- 9.1 New Hire:** Aaron Miller shared that the new High School Resource Room teacher is Caroline Alexander. NEW HIRES
- 9.2 Staff Resignation:** Aaron Miller shared that middle and high school band/choice teacher SeungJin Bae has resigned. STAFF RESIGNATION
- 9.3 Honor Grad Diploma Program:** Nate Underwood shared his proposal to honor those graduates that achieve above and beyond the Oregon and Vernonia graduation requirements. This would be in effect going forward for the 2022-23 year. Current graduates in the Class of 2022 who have met the spirit of the proposal will be recognized even if it is not fully implemented yet. HONOR GRAD DIPLOMA PROGRAM PROPOSAL SHARED
- 9.4 Confidential/Supervisory Employee Contract Proposal:** Aaron Miller shared the MOA for the Confidential/Supervisory Employee Group. They have negotiated a 3 year contract to get the District back on the rotation of one group each year. The proposed contract upgrades salaries with a 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). Even though this contract only has 6 steps, any employee having been in their position longer than 6 years gets a longevity increase of 3% every 3 years. CONFIDENTIAL / SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEE CONTRACT PROPOSED

Greg Kintz asked for clarification on the salary of the Business Manager. If the District had a full time business manager the salary noted on the contract would be applicable. However the current Business Manager is a half time employee of the District and half time employee of the NWRES D. Therefore, half of the amount noted on the contract is the responsibility of the District.

Full contract days would be 260 which is noted in the contract. Currently all employees in this group are a few days less than this and salaries are adjusted accordingly.

- 9.5 Calendar Revision:** Aaron Miller shared that on Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup> the District had 10 licensed staff out and only 5 substitutes available. There were also people out ill earlier in the week that would also likely be out on that Friday. To give parents adequate notice the decision was made on Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> that school would be cancelled on Friday. CALENDAR AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

Because of this closure and the weather / snow day in April the District is two days behind. The Board previously decided not to make up the missed day in April. Mr. Miller recommends not making up the missed day in May and stick to the plan of having the last day of school on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Board held discussion and the consensus was to not amend the calendar and just finish the year as is planned.

**10.0 ACTION ITEMS**

- 10.1 Resolution #2022-03 Adopting the Budget, Making Appropriations, Imposing and categorizing the Tax:** Scott Rickard moved to approve the Vernonia School District Budget for the 2022-23 school year as follows: 2022-23 BUDGET ADOPTED
  - General Fund - \$ 8,801,720
  - Special revenue Fund - \$ 3,376,583
  - Debt Service Fund - \$ 1,147,798
  - Capital Projects Fund - \$ 30,000
  - Total, All Funds - \$13,456,101As presented with a tax rate of \$ 5.0121 per \$1,000 of assessed value to be assessed in support of the General Fund and in the amount of \$1,100,000 for debt service for general obligation bonds.

Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- 10.2 **Resolution #2022-04 – Adopt and Appropriate Supplemental Budget and to Transfer Appropriations within Funds of the 2021-22 Budget.** Susan Wagner moved to approve resolution 2022-04 as presented. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. 2021-22 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET APPROVED
  
- 10.3 **New Hire:** Javoss McGuire moved to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation to hire Caroline Alexander, high school resource room teacher, for the 2022-23 school year. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. ALEXANDER HIRED AS HS RESOURCE ROOM TEACHER
  
- 10.4 **Staff Resignation:** Greg Kintz moved to approve the resignation of SeungJin Bae, MS/HS Performing Arts teacher, effective immediately. Scott Rickard seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. BAE RESIGNS
  
- 10.5 **Honor Grad Diploma Program:** Joanie Jones moved to approve the Honor Grad Diploma Program, effective June 9, 2022 as presented. Amy Cieloha seconded the motion. It was noted that Policy IKF will need to be amended with this approved change. Motion passed unanimously. HONOR GRAD DIPLOMA PROGRAM APPROVED
  
- 10.6 **Confidential/Supervisory Employee Contract Proposal:** Susan Wagner moved to approve the updated Confidential/Supervisory Employee Group Memorandum of Agreement for 2022-2025 as presented. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. CONFIDENTIAL / SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEE CONTRACT PROPOSAL APPROVED
  
- 10.7 **Calendar Adjustment:** No action needed, see item 9.5 above.
  
- 11.0 **MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:** Stacey attended a board chair meeting and shared a hand out on essential motions.  
  
Stacey indicated that she wants to schedule a full day board retreat in August to work on goals and the Superintendent/Board operating agreement. After discussion the date of Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. was decided on for holding this workshop/retreat. Barb Carr will check in with Jim Helmen to confirm his availability for this date.
  
- 12.0 **CONSENT AGENDA:** CONSENT AGENDA
  - 10.1 Minutes of 05/12/22 Regular Meeting and the 05/19/22 Workshop  
  
Amy Cieloha moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Susan Wagner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance. CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED
  
- 13.0 **OTHER ISSUES:** OTHER ISSUES  
OSBA’s Summer Board Conference is coming up next month. Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, Greg Kintz, and Amy Cieloha will be attending.  
  
Susan Wagner and Greg Kintz personally thank Aaron Miller and shared their appreciation for how he approached the children of Vernonia School District and his job as Superintendent.
  
- 14.0 **MEETING ADJOURNED** at 7:44p.m. ADJOURNED

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

  
Board Chair

  
District Clerk

