

MEETING MINUTES

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT Budget Committee Meeting - April 17, 2025 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 6:02 p.m. by Greg Kintz. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
- Budget Committee Present:** Amy Cieloha, Greg Kintz, Tony Holmes, Alicia Mahoney, Billi Kohler, Scott Laird, Javoss McGuire, Joanie Jones, Lisa Curry **BOARD PRESENT**
- Budget Committee Absent:** Susan Wagner and Stacey Pelster **BOARD ABSENT**
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent, Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Juliet Safier and Doug Bilodeau, Licensed Staff; and Silvia Stavreva, Classified Staff. **STAFF PRESENT**
- Visitors Present:** Solana Helmen **VISITORS PRESENT**
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- 2.0 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:** New budget committee members, Lisa Curry and Billi Kohler were welcomed. The committee introduced themselves. **AGENDA REVIEW**
- 3.0 ELECTION of BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Joanie Jones nominated Greg Kintz as Budget Committee Chair. Scott Laird seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. **KINTZ BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIR**
- Scott Laird moved to appoint Greg Kintz as Budget Committee Chair. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Greg Kintz abstained from voting. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.
- 4.0 ELECTION of BUDGET COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR:** Joanie Jones nominated Alicia Mahoney. Amy Cieloha seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. **MAHONEY BUDGET COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR**
- Amy Cieloha moved to appoint Alicia Mahoney as Budget Committee Vice Chair. Scott Laird seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with those in attendance.
- 5.0 BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES:** Scott Laird moved to approve the Budget Committee minutes from 05/09/2024 as presented. Joanie Jones 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**
- Jim Helmen and Marie Knight shared that a Google document will be shared with all members of the Budget Committee as the central location to submit questions. All questions and subsequent answers will be distributed to all members on the committee. It was also noted that on the OSBA website there is a Budget Committee training that contains good information and details the role of Budget Committee members. Marie Knight will share the OSBA budget committee training link.
- Jim Helmen shared that in preparing the 2025-26 budget, the District had a \$200,000 shortfall. He, Marie Knight and the administrative team worked collectively to maintain programs utilizing attrition of those staff members resigning or retiring at the end of this school year. It was noted that the proposed budget from the Governor will not be finalized until May or June. The District's proposed budget is based on the estimate of the State budget. Changes could occur if the State's final budget changes significantly from the estimates.
- 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**
- He highlighted the following changes represented in the proposed budget document.
- Add 3.75 hour Instructional Assistant at VFA

- Launch a 9-12 Alternative Education Hybrid Program
- 6% Certified and Classified Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) totaling 16% over 3 years
- Contingent on increased State School Fund
 1. K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) Textbook Adoption
 2. Readerboard Replacement

The District, by aligning staff with program needs and making disciplined fiscal decisions, has not reduced K-12 staff or student programs over the last two years. Ongoing investment continues in:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways
- Academic enrichment and dual credit opportunities
- Elementary enrichment programming
- Credit recovery and alternative education
- Small class sizes and strong behavioral intervention systems

The proposed budget is fully aligned with the School Board's goals and the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

BUDGET DOCUMENT REVIEW:

Jim Helmen and Marie Knight went through the budget document highlighting a variety of funds and functions as well as pointing out the areas of change as previously mentioned.

BUDGET DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

Some highlighted points included:

- District English Language Learners (ELL) students have increased
- Special Education students provide double funding up to a cap of 11% of our student population. There is currently a bill at the legislature to increase the cap to 15%
- VSD enrollment is transient. Students come in and leave.
- Staff needs are based on enrollment with a ratio of 17 students to 1 staff member at the elementary level. Neighboring districts budget at 30 to 1. Due to the nature of instruction, the Vernonia Family Academy ratio is 75 to 1.
- 72% of the District's total budget is tied to bargained contracts for staff. This leaves approximately 28% to play with in developing the budget.
- The \$200,000 shortfall is related to the PERS and unemployment increases.
- The ending fund balance is at 5.1%. The requirement established by budget law is 5%.
- Currently there is nothing budgeted for large capital improvements.

A review of the budget layout was given.

- All funds will have pages titled Resources which shows the revenue and then Requirements pages that show how the revenue will be spent through expenditures. In each area history of the actuals for years 2022-23 and 2023-24 are provided. The budgeted amounts for 2024-25 is also provided.
- 100 Funds are the General Fund
- 200 Funds are Special Revenue Funds (federal and state grants, etc.)

Jim Helmen shared that things are currently fluid at the State level. He is in constant communication with ODE and COSA to stay ahead of the game as much as possible. There potentially could be impacts if there is a loss in federal dollars. Financial decisions are not made in isolation. He has polled teachers, community, and parents through a budget survey and bases all decisions on those outcomes.

Scott Laird stated his appreciation for the time and work put in to assist the committee.

9.0 NEXT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING: May 8, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

10.0 ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

ADJOURN

Submitted by Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant



 Budget Committee Chair
 Budget Committee Meeting 04-17-25



 District Clerk