

MEETING MINUTES

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Regular Meeting – January 11, 2024 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 held virtually and called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Scott Rickard. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Scott Rickard, Joanie Jones, Susan Wagner, Javoss McGuire, Greg Kintz, Stacey Pelster, and Amy Cieloha. BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** None BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, Middle/High School Principal; Michelle Eagleson, Elementary Principal; Susanne Myers, Special Education Director; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; and Debbie Taylor, Licensed Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Scott Laird and Tara Kemp VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Jim Helmen added Discussion item #7.3 SIA Grant Agreement and the Action item #8.3 SIA Grant Agreement. Greg Kintz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Stacey Pelster seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. AGENDA REVIEW
- 3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT:** None PUBLIC COMMENT
- 4.0 SHOWING CASING of SCHOOLS**
- 4.1 Administrative Reports:** Administrator reports were provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Jim Helmen highlighted the new TV screens in each of the hallways. These are used to share information with students and staff. There were no questions from the Board on these reports. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS
- 5.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:**
- 5.1 Superintendent Report:** The Superintendent's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT
- Amy Cieloha asked for an update on the holiday camp over winter break. Jim Helmen shared that camp was a huge success, with approximately 30-60 kids attending depending on the day. There was some illness with staff and camp was shut down for a few days. Overall it was a great and positive experience for our students with healthy, fun and engaging activities. The after school program started this week. About 30-35 kids in grades K-5 have signed up to participate. Work is ongoing to expand the camp to include 6th grade students. Arts, music, and academic focused activities are taking place. Kasey Wilson, Camp Cedar Ridge, and district employee, Summer Gonzales are doing a great job overseeing the program. HOLIDAY BREAK and AFTER SCHOOL CAMP HIGHLIGHTED
- The district wide approval for free meals was explained by Mr. Helmen. The application with the Oregon Department of Education had some changes for the qualifying standards for free and reduced eligibility and this changed the district threshold to reach the target percentage to qualify. The State decided to factor in the students getting the Oregon Health Plan which greatly increased our numbers of students qualifying for free meals. Marie Knight and Barb Carr spent time in uploading student names and cross checking students that qualified and we were approved for all students to receive free lunch and breakfast for four years. It won't cover 100% of our costs, but our overall costs will be about 10%. This is a huge benefit for our students. Our kitchen staff have reported a significant increase in the numbers of students now eating breakfast and lunch. DISTRICT WIDE FREE MEALS FOR ALL STUDENTS EXPLAINED
- Mr. Helmen shared information regarding the highly qualified designation for classified staff. Instructional Assistants must have an Associates degree or higher or have completed 2 years of study at an institute of higher education. If they don't have this they must pass a local HIGHLY QUALIFIED STATUS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL

academic assessment – Work Keys. This assessment tests knowledge of basic reading, writing and math skills. Vernonia currently has 24 instructional assistants employed of which 11 have met the highly qualified status. Many of these employees are long-term employees, some are new employees. The Highly Qualified status was no longer a focus when the District was experiencing challenges of hiring staff. Moving forward, the District has identified the staff that need the highly qualified designation. The Human Resources department will be meeting with the employees to schedule a time to take the Work Keys assessment. If additional time is needed for this to take place the District will develop a plan. This is not unusual with staff shortages around the State. Greg Kintz expressed his concern that during COVID the District slipped in tracking this.

ASSISTANTS REVIEWED

5.2 Financial Report: Marie Knight shared that Tara Kamp, with Pauly Rogers and Company, was in attendance to present the audit and answer questions from the Board. Ms. Kamp explained the process of completing the audit and the results as follows:

FINANCIAL REPORT

1. A qualified opinion on the basic financial statements has been issued.
2. State minimum standards – an exception regarding budgeted appropriations was noted.
3. Federal Awards – no issues of non-compliance or questioned costs was noted.
4. Management Letter – a deficiency in adequate preparation for the audit

2022-23 FINANCIAL
AUDIT REPORT SHARED

After Ms. Kamp left the meeting Stacy Pelster asked for an explanation of the qualified exceptions and discrepancies in numbers. Marie Knight explained that every year the District looks at appropriations in June and will do an appropriations adjustment if needed. A lot of work to close out the year continues to take place after the June adjustment is made. Last June, the amount of the adjustment was not accurate. Marie Knight shared she is aware of how transfers effect the bottom line and has already started looking at appropriations for this year.

Scott Rickard asked for clarification on the limit of transferring 10% between funds. Marie Knight explained that if more than 10% is transferred between funds an appropriation resolution is required. This was done last year, however it was not enough. The Budget Actuals is what brought this issue to the forefront and is the reason for the comments in the audit.

There were no questions on the financial report.

5.3 Maintenance Report: Mark Brown's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. There were no questions from the board.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

6.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:

6.1 COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1.1 Safety Committee – Susan Wagner shared that the committee met this week for a short abbreviated meeting. Discussion about where the committee is headed and what they want to take on was held. The committee will be working with PACE and valuation.

6.1.2 Policy Committee – the committee has met and is sharing policy amendments this meeting for a 1st reading.

GCBDF/GDBDF – Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance

GCBDF/GDBDF-AR – Paid Family Medical Leave Insurance

GCPC/GDPC – Retirement of Staff. A question was asked about staff keeping full benefits if they are rehired after retirement from PERS. All sick leave and personal leave accrued is zeroed out and they start over accruing these benefits. Salary and insurance benefit would be kept the same. Pay is under the determination of the Superintendent to place that employee on the salary scheduled based on their experience. The job is posted and there is no limit as to how long the employee can work after retiring.

LBE – Public Charter Schools. None in our district but had to select language.

LBEA – Resident Student Denial for Virtual Public Charter School Attendance. A question about percentages of people wishing to go to a charter school - is it greater than 3%? No, not even close according to Mr. Helmen.

6.1.3 Scholarship Committee – no update provided

7.0 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

7.1 NWRES Local Service Plan for 2024-25: Jim Helmen shared the process of how 5% of funds from the State flow through Educational Service Districts (ESDs). Small Districts don't have the dollars to provide resources to special education students that is needed. A full time occupational or speech therapist can't be funded at the district level. These individuals are employed by the ESD and then their services are sold to the District in the amounts needed. Every year the services needed for students in our district are reviewed and a determination of services is needed. Another service provided to our District by the ESD is business services. They process payroll and accounts payable. A review of the amounts for services and costs the District has with the ESD was shared. Some of these costs are paid for with service credits allocated by the ESD to our District. NWRES LOCAL SERVICE PLAN DISCUSSED

Scott Rickard asked if the unit costs have changed? Yes, they have gone up.

7.2 Early Literacy Grant Proposal/Application: Jim Helmen shared that we have to provide our Board with information and give the public time to comment on the grant application. The District must complete the grant from the State even though it is a non-competitive grant. The 2023-24 allocation based on our ADM is \$41,513.22. The 2024-25 preliminary allocation is \$53,615.80. This grant will support K-3rd student early literacy and can be expanded to K-5 students. Details of the grant were shared. The grant has been submitted to ODE. To date, no feedback has been received. All indications is that it will be accepted. EARLY LITERACY GRANT PROPOSAL SHARED

The amount of work done to complete this grant was recognized by Scott Rickard.

7.3 SIA Grant Agreement 2023-24: Jim Helmen shared that last year the District wrote the SIA grant which supports funding for students that: SIA GRANT DISCUSSED

- meets mental or behavioral health needs
- increasing academic achievement
- reducing academic disparities for students from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities,
- students with disabilities
- English language learners,
- Economically disadvantaged students
- Students who are homeless, and
- Students who are foster children.

The effective date of this grant is July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024. The total amount of the grant is \$638,526.95. An update on our annual progress was shared. The full grant document as well as that SIA Annual Report is available on the District website. Jim Helmen shared that Vernonia School District is willing to fulfill all the obligations required of the District as part of the SIA grant.

8.0 ACTION ITEMS:

8.1 NWRES Local Service Plan: Stacey Pelster moved to approve the NWRES Local Service Plan for 2024-25 as presented. Javoss McGuire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. NWRES LOCAL SERVICE PLAN 2024-25 APPROVED

8.2 Early Literacy Grant Application: Greg Kintz moved to approve the Early Literacy Grant Application as presented. Joanie Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. EARLY LITERACY GRANT APPLICATION APPROVED

8.3 SIA Grant Agreement 2023-24: Stacey Pelster moved to approve the SIA Grant Agreement for 2023-24 as presented. Amy Cieloha seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. SIA GRANT AGREEMENT APPROVED

9.0 MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE:

9.1 Due to weather requiring this meeting to be held virtually, School Board Appreciation will take place at the February meeting. Debbie Taylor thanked the board for their time commitment to our youth. BOARD PERFORMANCE

10.0 CONSENT AGENDA:

CONSENT AGENDA

10.1 Minutes of 12/14/2023 Regular Meeting

Stacey Pelster moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Greg Kintz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED

11.0 OTHER ISSUES: Next agenda setting meeting will be Scott Rickard and Susan Wagner. Discussion was held on creating a cyclical schedule for board members to rotate through meeting to set the agenda. After discussion it was the consensus of the board that this was not needed.

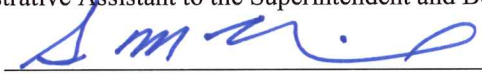
OTHER ISSUES

Greg Kintz shared that the OSBA Rural Caucus passed. He will let our board know when meetings will be held. Dates for the OSBA Summer board conference have been set for August 9-11. Location has not yet been determined. He will forward on information as it is received.

12.0 MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:07 p.m.

ADJOURNED

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



Board Chair



District Clerk