

MEETING MINUTES

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Regular Meeting – February 12, 2026 Vernonia Schools Building, 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 6:00 p.m. by Greg Kintz, Board Chair. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
- Board Present:** Lisa Curry, Tony Holmes, Alicia Mahoney, Amy Cieloha, Joanie Jones, Greg Kintz, and Javoss McGuire. BOARD PRESENT
- Board Absent:** None BOARD ABSENT
- Staff Present:** Jim Helmen, Superintendent; Nate Underwood, Middle High School Principal; Marie Knight, Business Manager; Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant; Brett Costley, Kendra Schlegel, Licensed Staff; and Camrin Eyrrick and Victoria Leonetti, Classified Staff. STAFF PRESENT
- Visitors Present:** Tara Kamp, Scott Laird, and TJ (?) VISITORS PRESENT
- 1.1** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- 2.0 AGENDA REVIEW:** Greg Kintz suggested amending the action language in item #8.2 to include “transfer limits per grade level”. It was noted that there was a typo in the O.R.S. number cited in item #11- it should read 192.660 (2) (i). AGENDA REVIEW
- Lisa Curry moved to approve the agenda as amended. Alicia Mahoney seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- 3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA and NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None. PUBLIC COMMENT
- 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 about the Core Review Meetings specifically the math strategies. How is the District aligning everything across the grade levels? Jim Helmen shared that the CIP aligns everything and there are math interventions and pull outs for students identified as currently not at grade level. They have created wing groups at the elementary and MTSS pull outs for reading and math intervention at the middle and high school. The District is using Freckle, an online program that associates with STAR Assessment for intervention. Reading intervention books have been purchased at the middle school level for students that need additional supports. The middle/high school principal is also working with staff to identify kids in 8th grade as well as 9th grade on track and providing help and intervention, and homework support.
- Kendra Schlegel shared that elementary staff are working with ESD once a month on math professional development. They are conducting Learning Walks, walking through all math classes to look at teaching strategies and how to respond, implement, review and discuss next steps. Elementary staff are sitting down with middle school teachers, sharing what they are working on and what is needed to strengthen skills for middle school.
- Brett Costley shared information regarding the Robotics team recent competition. VHS won 5 out of 5 qualification matches and finished 4th out of 24 teams. They were just 2 points away from going to state but will have another chance to qualify at an upcoming match in Philomath on February 21st and 22nd.
- Greg Kintz asked about enrollment fluctuations and would like to have information about where students are going when they withdraw. Mr. Helmen indicated he would check into this and get back to the board.

Amy Cieloha asked for an update on the recently held professional development with all staff about rebuilding culture and trust. Jim Helmen shared that the first step was to ask how staff are feeling and identify the impact. Step 2 was training with administrators on how to develop culture pillars. The 3rd step was holding staff to staff communication about what environment do you want to work in, what are you willing to hold yourself to, etc. With this information they created a framework. Meetings were held with elementary, middle and high school staff. The administrative team reviewed the data collected at these meetings and categorized it with headings or pillars. They developed 5 pillars and met with all staff last Monday. They were divided into groups mixed by building and were asked to identify 4 of 5 pillars they were willing to work in. The groups then developed adjectives under each pillar. This consolidated data will be the culture we live by in our District. How to move forward and keep this in the forefront has yet to be developed. Staff have requested that Principals hold staff accountable for professionalism.

5.0 BUSINESS REPORTS:

5.1 Superintendent Report: The Superintendent report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting,

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Jim Helmen was asked if the Budget survey has been sent to staff and community? Yes. Will the results of the Work Force Survey be shared with the Board? Yes, when result are available from the State.

An explanation of why it is important to have an equity committee member on the budget committee was given. They provide an overview to ensure all groups are supported. Jim Helmen offered to have the equity team present to the board.

Contract negotiations timeline has not yet been established. The Unions wanted to hear the outcome of the District annual audit first. Greg Kintz shared that there is a bill currently being considered which would turn all bargaining group contract negotiation oversight to the State.

Jim Helmen updated the Board on previous comments by the Safety Committee. A new sink will be installed in the shop. It has been ordered and installation will occur when it arrives. A quote has been received from Mr. Electric to tie into the drop down electrical boxes. Mist Elementary has a copy of their lock down and safety procedures. Jim indicated he needs to go out and run through them again with Mist staff.

5.2 Financial Report: The financial report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Discussion on the Financial Report was combined with item 5.2.1.

FINANCIAL REPORT

5.2.1 Financial Audit for 2024-25 Presentation: Tara Kamp, with Clear Trail CPAs, presented the District's Financial Audit for the 2024-25 year. There are three parts to the audit.

FINANCIAL AUDIT PRESENTED BY CLEAR TRAIL CPAs

1. Perform a financial statement audit testing financials created by management. Results were unfounded and they issued a clean audit.
2. Perform the Oregon minimum standards compliance audit ensuring compliance with all laws and regulations. Results found form ED-1 did not match the detailed budget and notice of public hearing for Resolution 2025-05 did not occur.
3. Perform the Federal single audit ensuring compliance with all grants. Results showed two issues of non-compliance and no questioned costs. The non-compliance issues included expenditure codes posted to the wrong account code and not having a second individual reviewing and approving the reimbursement claims. This is challenging in small districts due to limited staff.

Overall the District audit is good, according to Tara Kamp. Jim Helmen recognized Marie Knight, Business Manager, for the hard work.

Marie Knight shared with the Board that the Statement of Economic Interest will be coming out soon. She will monitor to ensure all Board members complete this Oregon Ethics Commission requirement.

The regular monthly financial report was reviewed and Board members were asked if they had questions. A question was asked about the Health Services expenditure line. This deals with additional ESD services and the offset revenue is in 2102 intermediate sources

FINANCIAL REPORT

An updated Student Body account balance statement was also provided to the Board. Marie also gathered all student body account reports given to the board since she began working on this in 2024-25 school year. Board members were offered a packet of these reports.

It was asked why the US Bank fees weren't captured. Marie stated that these fees increased and it wasn't noticed immediately. There was also a question regarding concession money and how this will be spent to benefit students? Jim Helmen shared that there is a clear separation between the money earned in concessions by the YTP coordinator. This money stays with and benefits the Transition students and their program. Currently sports programs will be running concessions and money earned will go to their respective programs. Details are still being worked out.

5.3 Maintenance Report: Mark Brown's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Discussion was held regarding the gym door-jam damage. Jim Helmen stated that a new metal threshold plate has been ordered. He will get an update on the damage and the plan to repair.

Comments were made about restrooms being checked for adequate supplies prior to sporting events. Also, there is a lack of signage directing visiting spectators to the restrooms in the blue hallway.

Clarification surrounding the PACE annual inspection was requested. Jim Helmen will research this.

Comments were made about lack of cleaning in the Mist Gym and the outside of the building needs to be cleaned. The front doors to the gym also are in need of repair.

6.0 BOARD REPORTS/ BOARD DEVELOPMENT:

6.1 Committee Reports:

COMMITTEE REPORTS
POLICY COMMITTEE

6.1.1 Policy Committee: The committee met and has quite a few policies for first reading on the agenda tonight. Jim Helmen stated the committee did a good job going through all policies and will meet again next Monday.

6.1.2 Safety Committee: An update from the Safety Committee was provided by Amy Cieloha. Discussion was held on the confusion around the high school having an open or closed campus. Jim Helmen indicated he will visit with Mr. Underwood and a statement will go out by the end of the day tomorrow. The Board consensus was in favor of giving this privilege.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

6.1.3 Scholarship Committee: Nothing reported.

SCHOLARSHIP
COMMITTEE

70 OTHER INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

7.1 Policy Updates: The following policies were presented for a first reading.

POLICY UPDATES –
FIRST READING

7.1.1 BBBB – Board Member Oath of Office

7.1.2 BH/BHA – Orientation of New Board Members

7.1.3 CGB – Evaluation of the Superintendent

7.1.4 CHCA – Handbooks

7.1.5 CI – Temporary Administrative Arrangements

7.1.6 DBD – Budget Priorities

7.1.7 DD – Grant Funding Proposals and Applications

7.1.8 DL – Payroll

7.1.9 FFA – Memorials

7.1.10 GB – General Personnel Policies

7.1.11 GBG – Staff Participation in Political Activities

7.1.12 IFD – Course Approval

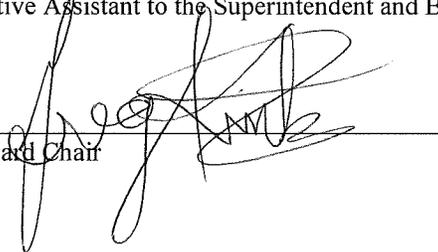
7.1.13 IGBHC-AR – Notice for Alternative Education

- 7.1.14 IGBHC – Alternative Education Notification
- 7.1.15 JFCA – Student Dress and Grooming
- 7.1.16 KBCA – News Release
- 7.1.17 KK – Visitors to District Facilities

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| 7.2 | Licensed Staff Contract Renewal in March for 2026-27: Jim Helmen shared that evaluations are completed for elementary staff and just a couple left at the secondary level. Currently all staff are in good standing. Recommendations for renewal will be presented at the March meeting. | NOTICE OF UPCOMING LICENSED STAFF CONTRACT RENEWALS |
| 7.3 | Student Transfer Limits for 2026-27: The intent of setting these limits applies to the number of out of district students requesting to come into the Vernonia School District. Likely, these limits won't be needed, but it allows the district to keep class sizes manageable. Jim Helmen recommends setting the limits at three students per grade level. | STUDENT TRANSFER LIMITS DISCUSSED |
| 8.0 ACTION ITEMS | | |
| 8.1 | Annual Financial Audit: Alicia Mahoney moved to approve the 2024-25 Financial Audit as presented. Amy Cieloha seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. | 2024-25 FINANCIAL AUDIT APPROVED |
| 8.2 | Student Transfer Limits: Alicia Mahoney moved to set the student transfer limits to three students per grade level for the 2026-27 school year as discussed. Lisa Curry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. | 2026-27 STUDENT TRANSFER LIMITS SET |
| 9.0 | MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE: Greg Kintz shared that the annual PACE Day is coming up in April. They are an insurance co-op. Board members were asked to let Greg know if they had interest in attending. | MONITORING BOARD PERFORMANCE |
| 10.0 CONSENT AGENDA: | | |
| 10.1 | Minutes of 01/08/2026 Regular Meeting.
Joanie Jones moved to approve the consent agenda as amended (typo on the minutes date listed). Lisa Curry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. | CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED |
| 11.0 | RECESS to EXECUTIVE SESSION under O.R.S. 192.660 (2)(i) "To review and evaluate the performance of the chief executive officer or any other public officer, employee or staff member..." at 8:32 p.m. | |
| 12.0 | RETURN to REGULAR SESSION at 9:03 | |
| 13.0 | OTHER ISSUES:
Next Agenda Setting Meeting – Wednesday, March 4 th at 5:00 p.m. Joanie Jones volunteered to join Jim Helmen and Greg Kintz. | OTHER ISSUES
NEXT AGENDA SETTING MEETING |
| 14.0 | UPCOMING DATES:
February 16, 2026 – NO SCHOOL, Presidents' Day
February 19, 2026 – Special Board Meeting 5:00-6:30 p.m.
March 12, 2026 – School Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. | UPCOMING DATES |
| 15.0 | MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:05 p.m. | ADJOURNED |

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

Board Chair



District Clerk

