

Minutes of Special and Work Meeting

The Board of Directors Ashland School District

A Special and Work Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Ashland School District was held Monday, January 27, 2020, beginning at 7:00 PM in the District Office, 885 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland OR.

1. Call to Order / Roll Check

Chair Westrick called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. A roll check confirmed that all four directors were present. Director Skuratowicz moved an amendment to the agenda that would move consideration of the Board's vacant seat to the end of the meeting, becoming Item #5. Director Prud'homme seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

2. Data presentations from K-8 schools

The principals of the K-8 schools presented data slides with updated information about their sites.

Principal McCollom reviewed strategies designed to attain projected benchmarks on Bellview's school improvement plan. She described new approaches to increasing mastery. Teachers have used supplemental materials for math along with a math specialist to boost learning. Writing skills have shown more of a challenge. Bellview is aligning rubrics with assessment standards and also developing new curriculum.

Principal Cuddeback reported that Helman achieved significant gains for ELL students in English Language Arts. The site council is doing parent education on the importance of attendance. Helman has reduced discipline challenges by using restorative justice and behavioral agreements. Teachers use Easy CBM to track progress during the year, carefully reviewing results for indications of problems. They also do strengths and difficulties for each student.

Principal Gyarmathy noted challenges in third grade math assessment and presented samples of diagnostic assessment tools being used to closely monitor students to address this. Scores are better in language arts but still lag behind a previous year. The district is supplying additional classroom support.

Principal Schaefer-Pew spoke to the strengths of teaching and collaboration at Willow Wind. Teachers emphasize standards based portfolio studies and project based learning. They are working on formative assessments, modifying instruction as they go.

3. Superintendent Report

- A. Superintendent Raymond briefly reviewed the first draft of an application for Student Investment Act funding. She is working through a narrative using a template provided by ODE. The district is advised to develop a tiered plan with back-up strategies so that if a first one falls through, there will be a “plan B” approved by ODE for use of the dollars. The final submission documents have not yet been released by ODE. Supt. Raymond reported that in order to begin staff recruitment that results in strong candidates in the spring, the district may begin to post open positions prior to the final review of our application.

Supt. Raymond reviewed highlights of the SSA planning meetings and how the team arrived at priority strategies. Augmenting staff is largely driven by the addition of educational assistants and other classroom specialists. Space is a limitation for adding classroom teachers.

Board members requested more detail on prospective employee head count and FTE equivalents for each line in the activities section of the draft and would appreciate distinguishing new hires/new positions vs. job expansion or re-assignment of existing staff.

4. Finance Report

- A. YAAL

Finance Director Valencia stated that the authorization for the Youth Academics and Activities Levy will expire June 30, 2021 and a renewal will need to be placed on an upcoming election ballot. Proposed timelines depend upon the election cycle the Board chooses, either May 2020 or November 2020. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of different timings and the need to develop a strong communication plan in order to demonstrate the value of the levy to voters. With several tax districts contemplating bond measures or other revenue proposals, it will be important to emphasize that there will be no increase in the assessment for the levy and the necessity of the many programs it supports for students. The members agreed to revisit the matter at the January 30 retreat.

- B. Monthly financial report

Ms. Valencia made a brief report of financial activity year-to-date as of December 31, 2019. Chair Westrick requested a future Board discussion about the annual auditor’s note regarding risk.

- C. City of Ashland request: Vertical Housing Development Zone

Question: Should the Board vote to approve the request from the City of Ashland to support a new Vertical Housing Development Zone as described?

There were a number of questions raised about the impact of opting in or out of this proposal. Director Prud’homme volunteered to contact the City to clarify before the January 31 deadline.

5. School Board Vacant Seat

The Board discussed the candidates who requested consideration for an appointment to fill the remainder of the term for Position #1. Chair Westrick noted that 3 votes

were required to secure an appointment.

Among the list of candidates queried by means of a straw poll, four names received a single vote each. Directors Prud'homme and Skuratowicz mentioned that they had not had time to connect with each of the candidates. Chair Westrick noted that the Board was pleased to have received a strong group of qualified candidates expressing interest, all of whom are doing important volunteer work in the community. The pool represents a wide range of experience and perspective that can only serve to make the board stronger.

Given the need for more interaction with candidates, Director Skuratowicz moved to table the matter until the February 10 meeting. Director Chang seconded the motion and it carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

6. Other items of interest

There were no other updates.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Westrick adjourned the meeting at 9:55 pm.

Submitted by:

Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: February 10, 2020

Board Chair, Jim Westrick

Superintendent Kelly Raymond