

# Minutes of Regular School Board Meeting

## The Board of Directors Ashland School District

---

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Ashland School District was held Monday, June 8, 2020, beginning at 7:00 PM via Zoom link.

### 1. **Call to Order / Roll Check / Vision and Mission Statement**

Board Chair Skuratowicz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and a roll check confirmed that all members were present.

#### Also present were:

HMK Program Director Chris McKay  
Acting Superintendent Steve Retzlaff  
Finance Director Alana Valencia  
Operations Director Steve Mitzel  
HR & Communications Director Laurie Rooper  
Board secretary Jackie Schad

### 2. **Welcome Viewers and Acknowledgments**

### 3. **Adoption of Agenda** (*At this time Board members are provided the opportunity to amend the Regular Session agenda.*)

#### **QUESTION: Should the Board adopt the June 8, 2020 Regular Session agenda as presented?**

Director Chang moved and Director Prud'homme seconded the approval of the June 8 agenda as presented. The roll was called with all members present voting Yes and the motion carried.

### 4. **Consent Agenda** (*All items may be adopted by a single motion unless pulled for special consideration.*)

#### **QUESTION: Should the Board approve the consent agenda for June 8, 2020 as presented?**

Director Monter-Rangel moved and Director Prud'homme seconded the approval of the consent agenda for June 8 as presented. The roll was called with all members present voting Yes and the motion carried.

#### A. Approval of Minutes

Regular Session of May 11, 2020 and Special Sessions of May 7, May 18, May 20, May 21, May 28, 2020 and Emergency Special Session May 23, 2020.

#### B. Personnel Report June 2020

The Board will review recommended personnel actions.

#### C. Enrollment update June 2020.

## 5. Recurring Reports

No reports were submitted.

## 6. Receive Public Comments (*The Ashland School District Board of Directors invites members of the public to submit written comments by email to [school.board@Ashland.k12.or.us](mailto:school.board@Ashland.k12.or.us) or by US Mail to 885 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520.*)

No public comments were received.

## 7. District Staff Updates

### A. Superintendent Report

Acting Superintendent Steve Retzlaff reported on planning underway for Schooling Through COVID in the 2020-2021 school year.

He began by clarifying the changes that occurred with the District's EDI position during the past year, as there has been misinformation circulating on social media. ASD has 1 full-time EDI position. That has not been cut or reduced in any way. The former coordinator, Becca Laroi, started as a full-time employee funded 50% by a grant and 50% by ASD. When she became the assistant principal at the high school, she was 50% high school AP and 50% EDI. Then 0.17 of the remaining EDI half FTE was applied to Libre Cory to support EDI work, primarily at the high school. In other words, for that year the EDI position was reduced by 0.37. In the coming year the EDI position will be restored to full-time and that position will be filled. This will actually be a net increase.

Mr. Retzlaff then proceeded to describe several potential scenarios for resuming school in the fall, ranging from a full return to physical school to a continuation of all students on distance learning. Because the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown, the district must be planning for alternate approaches. The preferred model is a "hybrid" where we get students into actual classrooms as many hours a week as practical, given social distancing and other prevention measures required, with some component of online learning. The district must also provide for students not able to return to the classroom for health or family reasons and provide services to a range of special education needs.

The State revenue projections, and therefore school funding appropriations, are also still not fully known. Finance Director Valencia presented three scenarios and the impact of different budget cuts, depending upon the State's revenue collection and legislative appropriation decisions still to be made. We may not know until the end of July or early August exactly what our funding will be and final decisions about educational models are also contingent on funding. For the time being, the district has implemented a hiring freeze on new positions.

Director Prud'homme thanked the team for a comprehensive report. The Board also commended Ms. Laroï for being flexible and adaptable to the district's changing needs during her first year of employment. The Board will appreciate regular updates as things progress.

There were questions about continuing arts programs including choir and the Speech & Debate program at the high school. AHS is doing an ongoing evaluation of students, classes and extracurricular activities. There are no concrete plans to reduce programs currently. However, administrators are evaluating everything in order to meet the student needs within our available resources. This depends partially on student interest to maintain or build a program. The district remains committed to performing arts and budget will play a role as we track student interests in particular classes.

Superintendent Retzlaff then gave a report on the many EDI activities that have been held during the past year, including instruction, celebrations, trainings, staff development, student programs, and others.

#### **B. Capital Bond**

ASD Program Executive Steve Mitzel and HMK Program Director Chris McKay gave the Bond Report.

##### **1) Monthly Update Report April 2020**

The Middle School, John Muir Outdoor School and Helman Elementary are completing the design phase and refining their plans. They have worked with a security consultant to complete standards based on assessment findings and potential solutions.

Communication channels continue to see tens of thousands of views. One interesting thing is that we are showing a projection of greatly decreased energy use by Helman when projects are completed. Helman has received design development drawings and a refined cost estimate. The Middle School is also receiving final documents.

The High School received a seismic grant of \$2.4 million tied to the Humanities building and its design meetings are restarting. The Walker Elementary core team completed programing and has moved to schematic design. The group has agreed to meet during the summer to get planning going again. Adroit Construction was selected and approved to be the Construction Manager | General Contractor.

Director Westrick offered the clarification that bond money is restricted to capital construction and is completely separate from operations, so funds cannot be used for school operations.

##### **2) Walker Elementary School Capital Construction Project Budget**

The Board considered a recommendation from the Walker construction team to set aside bond premium dollars sufficient to accomplish the current estimated construction budget. This action will allocate \$9,612,122 of remaining dollars from the bond premium for the Walker Elementary project. Director Westrick stated that this recommendation was discussed extensively at the June 2 work session and moved to approve the allocation of \$9,612,122 from bond premium revenue to the Walker Elementary project. Director Monter-Rangel seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held and all members voted Yes. The motion carried.

#### D. Finance Report

##### 1) Finance Report for period through April 30, 2020

Finance Director Valencia presented the April finance report. Local revenue is shown as 92.65% received to date. Property tax collections are down right now and we have tentatively reduced projections for this line.

Year-to-date expenditures are also showing somewhat low. Actual expenses are tracking salaries at about 74%. Ms. Valencia has been projecting an 8% ending fund balance, but will reassess that forecast for the May report.

##### 2) New Expenses Related to School Closure

Ms. Valencia reported new expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19 school closures. Director Chang asked if any of the federal CARES Act funding might be applied to this year and Ms. Valencia responded that the current intention is to apply these funds to next year. Ms. Valencia reported that she will do a month-end report to reconcile expenses through May 31, 2020 for the next review.

##### 3) Bond finance report

The Board received the monthly bond finance report.

#### 8. **Unfinished Business**

##### A. ASD-AEA Memorandum of Agreement updating expectations of certified staff during Distance Learning For All educational approach.

##### **Question: Should the Board approve the proposed Memorandum of Agreement governing expectations of certified staff during Distance Learning for All?**

HR & Communications Director Rooper explained that this outline was developed in conversation with AEA leadership following the school closure mandated by Governor Brown's "Save Lives Stay Home" order. We have been following these guidelines and she requested Board ratification. Director Chang moved and Director Monter-Rangel seconded the approval of the MOA governing expectations of certified staff during Distance Learning

For All. The roll was called with all directors voting Yes and the motion carried.

B. Update on Superintendent Search Process

HR Director Rooper reported that the internal search for candidates has produced one applicant. This person is a qualified candidate but for a search this significant, she is asking for the Board's preference for proceeding with a single applicant. It may be reasonable to extend the deadline and see if other candidates come forward, while giving the Board an opportunity to reflect upon its options.

Ms. Rooper was asked whether she had any indication that the original timeframe was too short and she responded that there had been some interest expressed but the demands of closing the school year were a barrier.

Director Chang asked about the June 30 deadline for making a decision and whether this was a regulatory matter, or was the deadline set by the Board. It may be that the compressed timeline is not reasonable for all involved.

Director Monter-Rangel said that he would like to extend the time. He has received emails from people asking for more time so that interested stakeholders can offer input.

Ms. Rooper noted that it is very rare, especially for a role of this magnitude, to have a single applicant. It is best practice to consider multiple qualified candidates. There is no explicit policy on this one way or the other. A credible competitive search sets up a successful applicant for success.

Director Chang stated that the Board has received considerable input about why it is not doing an external search. Should this be an interim appointment? They are somewhat boxed in by timing and circumstances.

Director Rooper recommended that the Board pause the process for one week to give additional applicants an opportunity and to deliberate on whether to proceed or seek an interim appointment with help from OSBA.

Director Westrick stated that the Board empowered the Chair to design a process considering input from all of the members. After further discussion, the consensus was to defer action for one week and then to consider and evaluate any applicants who have come forward by then, whatever the number may be.

9. **New Business**

- A. ASD-OSEA Memorandum of Agreement governing extra pay for essential workers during COVID-19 school closures April 1-June 30, 2020. **Question: Should the Board approve the proposed MOA governing extra pay for**

## **essential workers as proposed?**

There was a discussion of this proposal that included the following concerns:

- While appreciating the service of our employees in difficult situations, the concept of hazard pay is not something the school board has endorsed.
- Strong concerns raised about singling out one or more classes of employees for special consideration this way.
- No desire to ask for employees to return money already paid.
- If we need to close down again in the Fall or Winter, given fiscal situations, would we even have funds to pay something like this.
- Food service and bus drivers do interact with hundreds of people and thus incur extra risk in a situation with many unknowns.
- Strong desire to appreciate food service workers who are performing with reduced staff and increased risk out of a commitment to the district and the students.
- Board members share a genuine desire to appreciate the commitment of people who did leave the safety of their homes to work on site.
- The Governor's order kept us all on full pay status, unlike other sectors whose employees lost jobs and pay.
- Employees did nothing wrong.
- Should we ever consider this again, would like to see us tailor extra pay to specific identification of risks and not blanket to a class of employees.

Director Chang moved that the Board approve the proposed MOA governing extra pay for essential workers as proposed. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Director Westrick moved that we end the option for receiving additional pay related to COVID-19 effective tomorrow, June 9, 2020, and that the district does not ask employees to return anything they received to date. Director Monter-Rangel seconded the motion. The roll was called and with all directors voting Yes, the motion carried.

The Board emphasized that this does not indicate any lack of appreciation for their work. There was a flawed approval process but this was no fault of the employees involved.

### **B. Review of Whistleblower Policy**

The Board discussed possible revisions to Board Policy GBMA Whistleblower.

In recent conversations with district Lead Team members, employees expressed concerns that the current policy is not sufficiently protective. There was conversation about possible changes:

- How to assess addressing specific employee concerns
- Degree to which complaint resolution procedures that exist would cover this
- Should this be subject to grievance or contract negotiations
- How would an employee report and to whom
- What level of protection would be stipulated.

Director Chang commented that the existing policy is explicit in its protections but lacks procedural steps to safeguard their execution. Director Prud'homme advocated for anonymity in registering complaints. We need protections for due process and recommendations should complement or consider existing channels for complaints.

HR Director Rooper noted that changes should be coordinated with existing collective bargaining agreements. It may be worth discussing what the concerns being raised say about the culture of the school district and an underlying lack of trust. We should include legal review.

Director Westrick and Ms. Rooper agreed to outline next steps for this.

#### 10. **Announcements and Appointments**

Chair Skuratowicz read announcements of upcoming meetings.

#### 11. **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Skuratowicz adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm.

Submitted by:  
Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: July 13, 2020

---

Board Chair, Eva Skuratowicz

---

Acting Superintendent Steve Retzlaff