

**Bend-La Pine Schools  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: March 9, 2021**

**Meeting Location**

To support Governor Brown's executive orders for social distancing, the Board of Directors conducted the Board Meeting virtually, through Cisco WebEx. The meeting was also live streamed to the BLS Schoolboard YouTube webpage.

**Board Members Present**

Carrie Douglass *left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.*

Melissa Barnes Dholakia

Caroline Skidmore

Amy Tatom

Julie Craig

Stuart Young

Shimiko Montgomery

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Douglass at 5:30 p.m., roll call followed.

**Review of the Agenda**

Superintendent Nordquist said Sean Reinhart will share a Strategic Priorities Update on Equitable School Environments immediately after the Budget Workshop.

**Public Comment**

Chair Douglass reviewed the process and time limitations for public comment and noted the Board received several public comments in written format, and comments from the following community members were read aloud: Greg Moore, Shelly Baker, Brain Sweeney, Beth Thomas, Tawnya McPhetridge, Angie Mills-Price and Marty Brill.

Chair Douglass asked Superintendent Nordquist to explain why grades 4-12 and not back to class like grades K-3. Nordquist explained, there are three primary barriers for all students returning to school full time: the current 6ft. physical distancing requirement, 35 sq. ft per person capacity for any given space, and cohort size at the secondary level (no more than 100 during the instructional day within a given week). She noted Governor Brown's recent hybrid instruction directive. Two areas for possible revisions that continue to be looked at are physical distancing and cohort size; with an anticipated announcement from the state on or about March 19.

Julie Craig asked Nordquist to share reasons why the district is choosing to not allow spectators at this time. Nordquist noted there is contradictory guidance at the state level making it very difficult for districts to navigate. Julianne Repman shared that starting on Friday, spectators will be allowed at some sporting events through a ticketing process and following contact tracing guidance. Repman added that the district continues to work with the Oregon Department of Education to allow for more spectators and is hopeful for expanded spectator opportunities in the near future.

**Budget Workshop**

Superintendent Nordquist thanked members of the Budget Committee for attending this evening and offered to help answer any questions in advance of the first budget committee meeting scheduled for April 13.

Nordquist shared the promise of Bend-La Pine Schools: Every student in Bend-La Pine Schools is known by name, strength and needs, and graduates ready for college, career and citizenship; as it is a foundation for the work of establishing priorities and investments. Nordquist reviewed the district and Board's desired outcomes which they measure and assess on a variety of levels. She noted the district's most important asset are the staff members of

Bend-La Pine Schools; which is currently 1,778 FTE, and represents approximately 83-85% of the district's budget being devoted to salaries and benefits for staff.

Nordquist reviewed the district's strategic priorities and shared about the work being done and goals for each priority:

1. Empower student, family, and community voice; strengthen sense of inclusion and belonging for all students and families
2. Create safer, healthier, more equitable school environments for students and families from underserved populations
3. Review and redesign curriculum to include anti-racist resources and diverse perspectives in all content areas
4. Focus on core curricula, instruction, and assessment practices that elevate learning for all students, but especially those from underserved populations
5. Diversify staff in all classifications to bring multiple perspectives to our work and to better reflect the student and family demographics of Bend-La Pine Schools

Brad Henry shared about the district's budget process and reviewed student enrollment over the past 10 years as it directly impacts funding and investment. Leah Bibeau reviewed state funding and the Governor's proposed budget for 2021-22, which is a decrease from the current year's funding. Henry reviewed the Student Investment Account (SIA) and Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund (ESSR) and the funds the district has received thus far from both funding sources. Henry said the district received a reduced SIA allocation for 2020-21 and implemented part of the district's board approved SIA plan. The SIA allocation for 2021-22 is projected to be \$11.5 million. To date, the district has received \$10.45 million from ESSR which the district has used to purchase iPads for grades K-2, PPE, hotspots, staffing and summer academic programming for 2021 and 2022. The district expects to hear what the third ESSR allocation will be within the next weeks.

Henry reviewed cost factors for the general fund including maintaining the same class size targets as budgeted for 2020-21, lower student enrollment will reduce staffing, staffing at Caldera High School, employee contracts through June 2021, PERS rate decreases, Caldera opening costs and liability / property insurance increases.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia shared her thanks for the presentation and alignment of the budget to strategic priorities and asked if there are any other examples of where the budget invests into the strategic priorities. Nordquist noted SIA dollars have been invested in staffing to support social emotional and behavioral health from a new director, to certified and classified staff in every building to help support students. Learner access to high quality instruction, increases in instructional coaching and high quality professional development have also been a priority for investment as well. Henry answered questions related to staffing allocations in the general fund as the district faces reduced enrollment and how SIA funds will be used to help hire staffing for identified priorities.

Chair Douglass shared her thanks for the budget update and looks forward to future budget committee meetings.

### **Social, Emotional and Mental Wellness**

Sean Reinhart shared an update on the progress over the last months; and announced the district has hired a Director of Social, Emotional and Mental Wellness; Jennifer Hauth, who will begin July 1, 2021. Reinhart noted that district has also adopted a core SEL instructional framework and common integrated culture of care practices and shared about how both will funnel into schools across the district.

Reinhart reviewed the Restorative Practices trainings that have taken place and noted there are future trainings which will include more district staff members to help align with the Every Student Belongs initiative from ODE including Restorative Practices in the district's SEL framework.

Douglass thanked Reinhart for the update and said SEL has always been a priority for the Board, but is even more so now with all that the pandemic has brought. Barnes Dholakia asked if there are plans to help support coaching and capacity in Restorative Practices. Reinhart shared that Behavior Coaches and some staff will provide coaching

capacity for the district and there will continue to be trainings and support to expand coaching efforts. Shimiko Montgomery asked how the Board can help support and move the SEL work forward. Reinhart suggested identifying metrics and measures related to SEL work which will help the Board identify Ends that they would like to track and evaluate.

### **Consent Agenda**

Chair Douglass noted the updated OSEA personnel report and the contract renewal for licensed staff members as listed on the consent agenda.

**Julie Craig moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.**

### **Action Items**

#### **❖ Land Purchase for Future Elementary School**

Mike Tiller reviewed the executive summary in the board packet. A site in the new subdivision, Petrosa, has been identified as a prime location for a future elementary school. Tiller noted the advantage of doing a land deal with a developer means the site is development ready with the purchase, which is a very cost effective method to purchase property for the district. This purchase price for 10 acres is \$2,885,000 for 10 acres. The land will be fully served by roads and utilities and is considered a “build ready” site.

**Julie Craig moved to approve the agreement to allow the District to purchase 10 acres in the Petrosa Development for a future elementary school. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.**

Chair Douglass thanked Tiller and Henry for their future thinking efforts to prepare for growth while being fiscally responsible with tax payer dollars.

### **Reports**

#### **❖ Bond Update – Review of 2017 Bond Projects**

Mike Tiller shared an update on the projects completed and currently underway which are funded by the 2017 Bond. The \$268 million bond’s focus included two new schools, maintenance and preservation at existing buildings, classroom additions and modernization, and safety and technology improvements.

Tiller highlighted the following projects:

- North Star Elementary – completed and opened fall of 2019
- Caldera High School – on track to open fall of 2021 and will help to alleviate overcrowding in Bend-area high schools
- Pilot Butte Middle School – the three year renovation project is now complete, including a complete architectural renovation, new secure lobby, new roofs on several buildings and new lighting and energy efficient upgrades throughout
- Amity Creek, at Thompson Elementary – also underwent a complete architectural renovation which includes new flooring, windows, LED lighting and roof
- Bend Senior High – currently in the first phase of their master plan which includes four new classrooms and large multi-purpose instructional space. The next phases of the Bend High master plan will be funded by future bond dollars
- High Desert Middle School – a new, second gymnasium is now complete, and LED lighting throughout the building is complete
- Juniper Elementary – a new gymnasium is near completion and new master plan has been developed for the campus for future improvements
- La Pine Middle School – conversion of a regular classroom to a wet science classroom
- Future projects include renovation and improvements at Jewell Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary, Cascade Middle, Three Rivers and Ensworth Elementary

Chair Douglass thanked Tiller and his team for their incredible work and added that that Board hired an independent audit firm with 2017 Bond dollars to help review the district’s planning and facilities management and the results of that audit confirmed the excellent facility planning and management work and fiscally responsible practices the district follows. Douglass also thanked the community for their continued support of

bond measures. Julie Craig complimented Tiller and the coordination of all the project managers and contractors it takes to pull off large construction projects in the timeframe they do. Caroline Skidmore appreciates the upgrades specific to energy efficiency and noted her desire to possibly offer year round school or programs and how we might consider air conditioning in more schools. Barnes Dholakia shared her appreciation to Tiller and voters for the balanced approach to bonds as we focus on future planning efforts while maintaining our assets. Tiller noted past bond-funded projects that have made significant improvements to existing facilities and agreed, the support of the community has been critical in the district's ability to provide and improve upon our schools.

❖ **Executive Limitation 9 – Technology Policy Monitoring Report**

Superintendent Nordquist shared her appreciation to the Instructional Technology and Information Technology teams who made distance learning a possibility this past year. Skip Offenhauser echoed Nordquist's sentiments about the transition to remote, distance learning, adding the tremendous efforts by both teams was incredible. The foundations that were in place made the quick transition to distance learning possible. Offenhauser noted the issuing of iPads to all K-2 students, hotspot distribution, implementation of WebEx and instructional technology help desk support for staff, students and families was instrumental in making distance learning possible.

Amy Tarnow complimented Instructional Technology and Online team who have been incredible during this past year to support teachers as they made the transition to distance learning, literally overnight. Tarnow shared highlights of the work this past year including digital instruction for K-2 teachers and how to help those teachers use iPads, the implementation of Canvas as the district's learning management system across grades 6-12, Sora Digital Library expansion with an additional 3,500 titles to the district's offering, and support of over 60 digital curriculum and tools that have been purchased to help support teachers and classrooms.

Tarnow highlighted Bend-La Pine Online and the team that helped bring on new students, staff and systems up to help support the incredible growth of the program. Tarnow noted the enrollment growth, GED support, individual and full time class enrollments, and expansion of local support which all have made the accomplishments of this year truly incredible.

Juan Cuadros reviewed priorities for the 2021-22 school year and beyond which include increasing digital responsibility, awareness and instruction support for grades K-12, continue to be mindful of student screen time, increase the use of digital platforms and minimize the use of commercial services, continue to provide and expand online choices, continue to improve access to digital systems, increase bilingual digital resources, focus on professional learning and coordination of real-time access and support for teachers and the district's Information Technology team.

Caroline Skidmore asked if there is a way that the district can limit screen time. Offenhauser said there is not currently a district control to monitor time limits but emphasized the digital citizenship and educating students and families about best practices and proper use of digital devices. Nordquist noted the district does have plans to do a digital review process planned for fall of 2021, as part of Executive Limitation 9.

Amy Tarnow shared her appreciation for the online options the district has provided to families and students this year. Nordquist agreed and shared her thanks for the incredible effort to expand Bend-La Pine Online and the District CDL program.

Nordquist shared about the increased security measures the Informational Technology has implemented this year from staff required cyber security training, to implementing a multi-factor authentication, to taking some district systems off the public internet to provide further protection and looking more closely at the apps and digital services used by students to ensure student data is protected.

Barnes-Dohlakia shared her appreciations for the efforts made to support student connectivity and the implementation of Canvas for grades 6-12, amongst other highlights shared. She asked about technology and curriculum alignment and how the district considers technology in part of upcoming curriculum adoptions. She also asked about grading and how we might use IT for more mastery based assessment. Julie Craig asked about iPads and if there is any consideration for using alternate devices. Tarnow shared the district continually looks at the engineering and functionality of the product and how it integrates with our district systems.

### **Board Comments**

Amy Tatom feels like the district is in a very good place. She will continue to push for the health and safety of staff and students and is hopeful for as much of a normal return to school as in possible in fall of 2021. She encouraged community members to stay vigilant in healthy best practices, to get vaccinated, and continue to be patient and calm so that students can return and stay in school. She thanked district leaders and board members for their efforts over the past year.

Julie Craig agreed with Tatom and shared her hopes for a normal start to the 2021-22 school year.

Caroline Skidmore shared about recent school visits and how impressed she was with students following the rules and appreciates how hard this year has been for students, staff and families. She thanked schools and the district for following protocols and being creative in efforts to return to in person instruction.

Shimiko Montgomery shared her thanks and appreciation for all who presented and is grateful for the meaningful work that continues in the midst of a pandemic year. The effort and teamwork are much appreciated.

Stuart Young added his appreciation from finances to technology, nutrition, transportation to school staff members. In this difficult year, the professionalism across the system has been outstanding and is appreciated.

Melissa Barnes Dholakia appreciated all the information and discussions this evening. She noted the Oregon House and Senate are looking to approve bills that require districts across the state to do many of the things Bend-La Pine is already working on – including technology efforts, returning students to in person instruction and equity. She shared her excitement that Bend-La Pine Schools is one of the few districts in the state that have the top two leaders who are women, noting International Women’s Day and thanked Superintendent Nordquist and Katie Legace for their leadership.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Recorded by: Andrea Wilson

**Minutes approved at 4.13.2021 board meeting**