

Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: June 15, 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
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 5:33 p.m. with a reminder that the School Board continues to meet virtually pursuant to Governor Brown's Executive Order 2016. It states that during the COVID-19 emergency period the governing body of a public body shall hold public meetings and hearings by telephone, video, or through some other electronic or virtual means whenever possible and that for those public meetings held virtually that the public body shall make available a method by which the public can listen to or virtually attend the public meeting or hearing at the time it occurs. And that the public body does not need to provide a physical space for the public to attend the meeting or hearing. In alignment with this order, the Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors continues to meet virtually until otherwise directed by Governor Brown and we are ensuring the public's ability to attend through the livestreaming of our meetings. The District is in collaboration with the Board and is working proactively to upgrade audio/visual equipment in our board room so as soon as Governor Brown adjusts the executive order we will not only be able to meet in person but also have the ability to livestream audio and visual from our meetings. Chair Douglass noted that prior to the pandemic our school board was not livestreaming our board meetings so this is a positive outcome from the pandemic that will advance access for our community.

Review of the Agenda

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia moved to add Reporting Out from Executive Session Regarding Complaint Process to the Agenda. Caroline Skidmore seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia moved to add a proclamation to declare June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month to the Agenda. Amy Tatom seconded the motion.

Unanimous approval for both motions to be added after the Public Comment section of the Agenda.

Lord Nordquist, Superintendent, took a moment to honor and acknowledge departing Board members Caroline Skidmore, Dr. Stuart Young, and Julie Craig.

Nordquist recognized Caroline Skidmore for accomplishing so much in her single term, for her personal and professional passions in early literacy, her environmental stewardship, passion for the potential misuse and overuse of technology, and faithful servitude on the core return to school team this past year. Nordquist noted that her passions and work will influence the District long after she leaves her position.

It was noted that Dr. Stuart Young served on the Board for seven years and that his prior experience as a school and district administrator and leader gave him great perspectives. She noted his unfailing optimism and positivity and what a pleasure it was to work with him.

During Julie Craig's nine years on the Board, she was actively involved in two superintendent searches and two capital improvement bond campaigns. Craig has always been an extremely passionate advocate for struggling students and the programs serving them.

Nordquist noted that each departing board member will receive an engraved gavel with their name and years of service so they can continue to keep order as they did while serving the Board. With deep gratitude, the staff, students, and families of Bend-La Pine Schools wish them all the best.

Public Comment

Chair Douglass noted written Public Comment was received as well as requests to speak during Public Comment. Douglass reminded participants that each speaker has a maximum of three minutes and there is a maximum of ten minutes per subject matter. Public comment is accepted in the order received and Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia will serve as the time keeper.

Shelly Baker, parent, shared her feelings for the need for in-person school board meetings and the impact of requiring masks for children. She asks the Board to advocate for no-mask requirements at the state level.

Laurie Hetherington, parent, spoke regarding the impact of losing in-person instruction on her son who accesses special education services. She stressed the need for consistency and daily interactions and that masking limits students' abilities to interact with their peers and providers. Hetherington asks that schools open full time and that mask mandates are removed for next year.

Rozilyn Holland, parent, shared her feelings regarding the isolation students have felt during distance learning and even during in-person instruction with the forced social distancing. Holland expressed her frustration with the quarantine process for non-symptomatic children. She expressed her desire for no-masking guidelines and no COVID-19 vaccine requirements for students. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia stopped Holland's comments at the three-minute maximum time limit.

Amy Tatom read a written message submitted by BJ Baker. Baker wrote asking for in-person meetings, making masks optional, and a focus on academic excellence free of ideology.

Amy Tatom read a written message submitted by Jan Cox. Cox shared the need for transparent in-person board meetings, optional masks and vaccines, and a focus on academic excellence.

Julie Craig read a written message submitted by Kelly Boyd, mom, Nurse, and former Bend-La Pine Schools parent. Boyd discussed the need for optional masking for students and asked Board members to advocate for parents and students to be able to make their own choices.

Caroline Skidmore read a written message submitted by Ellen Colton. Colton stated that we need to hold education at highest priority. She shared her opinions on the District's Excellence and Equity Policy and curriculum in schools. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia stopped Colton's comments at the three-minute maximum time limit.

Shimiko Montgomery read a written message submitted by Doug Brown, retired Bend-La Pine Schools teacher. He shared his disappointment with the ACR (Area Change Request) process, specifically in regards to Caldera High School.

Agenda Amendments

❖ June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Julie Craig read Resolution 1916, June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month.

Chair Douglass moved to approve Resolution 1916 and to proclaim June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the Bend-La Pine School District. Amy Tatom seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ Reporting Out from Executive Session Regarding Complaint Process

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia reviewed that the Board received a formal complaint made by Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer against Board Chair Carrie McPherson Douglass on May 5, 2021. The Board met in Executive Session on May 11, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. During that meeting, there was consensus for the Board to direct legal counsel to secure an independent third party to investigate the complaint. Legal Counsel, Greg Colvin, secured Rebekah Jacobson from Garrett Hemann Robertson in Salem, Oregon, as the investigator.

The results of the investigation were reviewed in Executive Session today, June 15, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. The results of the investigation showed that McPherson Douglass' actions did not violate Board Policy related to Board conduct, nor legal standards set out for campaign speech, nor the District's harassment policy. The allegations are deemed unsubstantiated and no further action is warranted. The full report will be released to both Ms. Lopez-Dauenhauer and Ms. McPherson Douglass per their request, which then enters the report into public record.

Public Hearing 2021-2022 Budget

Chair Douglass recessed the regular board meeting and called the 2021-22 Budget Public Hearing to order at 6:13 p.m. There was no public comment received. The regular meeting was reconvened at 6:14 p.m.

Public Hearing Naming of New Building at Bend Senior High School

Chair Douglass recessed the regular board meeting and called the Naming of the New Building at Bend Senior High School Public Hearing to order at 6:14 p.m.

Chair Douglass read a written message submitted by Dick Tobiason, Chair, Bend Heroes Foundation, LTC US Army, Retired. Mr. Tobiason summarized Mr. Robert Maxwell's military and teaching accomplishments and reflected on his character. He offered to create an exhibit of Mr. Maxwell's memorabilia at the new Robert D. Maxwell Center at Bend Senior High School. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia stopped Tobiason's comments at the three-minute maximum time limit.

Amy Tatom read a written message submitted by Dennis L. Drury, Commander, American Legion Stevens-Chute Post #4. He reiterated the statements submitted by Mr. Tobiason and urged the District to waive the required waiting period for naming a building after the deceased and to name the new building at Bend Senior High School the Robert D. Maxwell Center.

Chair Douglass reconvened the regular meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Consent Agenda

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

Reports

❖ Financial Update

Leah Bibeau reported on the 4th quarter financial data. Bibeau noted that the actual data is through May 31, 2021, with projections through the end of the fiscal year.

❖ **Policy Update**

Andrea Wilson reported on several policies that have been revised or are in the revision process. Wilson noted that the District is starting to align it's equity work in the District policies and regulations.

Action Items

❖ **Naming of New Building at Bend Senior High School**

Amy Tatom shared her full support for naming the building after Mr. Maxwell and waiving the five-year waiting period requirement for the deceased.

Chair Douglass noted that she is also in support of naming the building after Mr. Maxwell; however, she shared that she would not be in favor of waiving the waiting period for the naming of a school.

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia shared that she is in favor of the naming as Mr. Maxwell was an excellent role model for his service to country and as an educator.

Stuart Young moved to name the new building at Bend Senior High School the Robert D. Maxwell Center. Caroline Skidmore seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ **Bend International School Charter Renewal Request**

Bend International School submitted their written request for renew their charter and a public hearing was held on May 11, 2021.

Chair Douglass moved to approve the Bend International School Charter Request Renewal. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ **Resolution 1912: 2021-22 Board Meeting Schedule**

The Board will continue to meet in regular session on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and in work session on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

Amy Tatom moved to approve Resolution 1912: 2021-22 Board Meeting Schedule. Julie Craig seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ **Resolution 1913: 2021-22 Budget Appropriations**

Julie Craig moved to approve Resolution 1913: 2021-22 Budget Appropriations. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ **Resolution 1914: 2021-22 Impose Tax**

Julie Craig moved to approve Resolution 1914: 2021-22 Impose Tax. Stuart Young seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ **Resolution 1915: Declaration of Land Surplus**

Mike Tiller, Executive Director of Facilities, reviewed the property in question, a strip of land along the north border of Skyview Middle School currently a dedicated right-of-way for the former Cooley Road. Tiller stated that the District does not have a need for this property and is asking the Board to declare it as surplus so the land can be traded with the City of Bend for another, usable plot of land near the Bend Transportation site.

Julie Craig moved to approve Resolution 1915: Declaration of Land Surplus. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

❖ Land Exchange

Mike Tiller, Executive Director of Facilities, summarized the land exchange between the District and City of Bend. The District-owned land north of Skyview Middle School, recently declared as surplus, will be exchanged with a plot of land that adjoins the District's Bend Transportation site in the northeast corner. The net proceeds due the school district from the City of Bend after the exchange will be \$169,608.00 due to the size difference in the plots of land.

Chair Douglass moved to approve the exchange of District land at Skyview Middle School with City of Bend land located adjacent to the District's Bend Transportation site. Shimiko Montgomery seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Board Comments

Vice Chair Melissa Barnes Dholakia appreciated our partners at Mosaic Medical for helping vaccinate our students to help our community get back to normal. She gave a shout out to Deschutes County Commissioners and Budget Committee and the potential of what is to come in regards to mental health counselors in schools. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia thanked Stuart, Julie, and Caroline for their service to the Board. She also thanked Robert Maxwell for being such an exemplary role model for our community.

Amy Tatom thanked Julie, Caroline, and Stuart for their service and partnering with them during these last 15 months during the pandemic. Tatom addressed the divisions in the community, as were heard in tonight's public comments, and encouraged everyone to do their own research and to make their own decision in regards to masking. She also stressed the importance of teaching social, emotional learning (SEL) in schools. She reminded everyone that the Board advocates for students and families in all of their work.

Shimiko Montgomery echoed Amy's comments. Montgomery addressed the criticism of NEA (National Education Association) and BLM (Black Lives Matter) that was heard in tonight's public comments and apologized to the community for allowing racist comments to have a platform at the Board meeting. She noted that she takes racism very seriously. Montgomery thanked Julie, Caroline, and Stuart for what they have given our community over the years and for the opportunity to work with them.

Chair Carrie Douglass echoed much of what had already been said this evening. She also wanted to dispel the myth that Critical Race Theory (CRT) is being taught in our schools as it is not part of our curriculum. Chair Douglass noted that she feels teaching equity to students helps prepare them for the future. She will continue to push aggressively when the state isn't following the most current science and she will continue to follow science and recommendations of health professionals. Chair Douglass thanked Julie, Stuart, and Caroline for the opportunity to work with them: Julie for her creativity and creative thinking and questions, Caroline for her persistence and passion for issues important to her, and Stuart for his positivity and reminders to focus on the wins. She stated she is honored to have served with all of them.

Julie Craig thanked everyone for their kind words. She reflected on her appointment to the school board nine years ago and how personal it has been for her. Craig thanked everyone for all of their hard work, especially over this past year, and was recently reminded during the graduation ceremonies why the Board does the work it does. She stated that being a Board member was an honor and wished everyone the best of luck moving forward and reminded everyone to be proud of all the work they have done.

Caroline Skidmore reflected on her two years on the Board and noted that she has attended more meetings virtually than in-person due to the pandemic. She listed the highlights of her term: BLS was the largest district to return to in-person learning, BLS provided the opportunity for all staff to be vaccinated, equity and anti-racism work the Board and District has done and that it remains a priority moving forward, the Superintendent hiring process, eliminating barriers for children that choose to be vaccinated, and her most favorite highlight was visiting schools and interacting with students. Skidmore mentioned that she is coming

away with a new perspective on how students experience school and why our work with equity and excellence is such important work. She is so proud of our schools and the direction we are heading.

Stuart Young reflected on joining the board reluctantly seven years ago and how much he has learned from everyone over the years. He thanked Superintendent Lora Nordquist and Katie Legace for their excellent leadership skills. Young thanked everyone and wished them well.

Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia recognized Superintendent Lora Nordquist for stepping up as Interim during the pandemic. She noted Nordquist's boldness, responsiveness, brilliance, compassion, firmness, her vision that helps others step up, and the fact that she holds students and families as her north star. Vice Chair Barnes Dholakia expressed her deepest thanks to Nordquist for not only stepping in but also for stepping up and thanked her for her service.

Julie Craig added that she had visited Matt Fox's Social Justice class at Bend Senior High School and encourages all member of the Board to visit the class and see the work they are doing.

Chair Douglass adjourned the 2020-2021 school year Board at 7:19 p.m.

Recorded by: Janet Bojanowski, Board Clerk

Minutes approved at 7.13.21 Board Meeting.