

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Check

Chair Dyson called the meeting to order and a roll check confirmed that all directors were present.

2. Land Acknowledgment

Director Hatch read the Land Acknowledgment.

3. Adoption of Agenda

NOTE: Because there were children among the Helman guest speakers, Chair Dyson requested that the Helman Elementary school report be moved ahead of the consent agenda adoption items.

Director Ruby moved and Director Skuratowicz seconded the modification of the proposed agenda to move the Helman Elementary update earlier on the agenda and the motion carried by unanimous approval of the members.

4. Consent Agenda

Director Franko moved and Director Hatch seconded the approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

4.A. Approval of Minutes of the November 9, 2023, regular session and the November 30, 2023, special session.

4.B. Personnel Report for December 2023

4.C. Enrollment Report for December 1, 2023

4.D. Board Policy Update: Personnel - First Read

4.D.1) **Policy GBL** Personnel Records

4.E. Board Policy Updates - Fiscal Policies: First Reading

4.E.1) **Policy DBEA** Budget Committee

4.E.2) **Policy DH** Loss Coverage

Director Skuratowicz asked if the school board members were covered by the liability policy. Business Director Scott Whitman said that board members are covered for any potential liability occurring in the performance of their duties according to law and policy.

4.E.3) **Policy DJC** Bidding Requirements

5. School Report - Helman Elementary

Helman Elementary Principal Michell Cuddeback, Student Coach Christie Lawson, and Helman fifth grade students Canyon Barrett, Lexi Crawford, Molly Michener, and Orion Pennell presented on the Junior Coaches program at the school.

The role of the junior coaches is to help resolve conflicts between students, lead expectation stations used by the school to teach student conduct expectations, and choose and develop games that they lead on the playground. The students described the game of Trash Ball that one of the junior coaches made up as a way to use old PE balls. Students divide into teams and pitch the balls into trash cans. Coaches meet twice a month, working together to choose the games for upcoming weeks. They help referee playground disagreements using student behavior expectations to be safe, respectful, and responsible with each other. Helman has 26 fifth grade junior coaches. Teachers selected the first group and the junior coaches help mentor younger kids to take their places.

The Board thanked Helman for an excellent presentation.

6. Recurring Reports

6.A. AHS Student Report

Willa Vogel and Kendra Machala presented the AHS student report. Both Girls and Boys basketball teams had successful games. The annual Winter Fair was a success and the students held a winter food drive. Ashland seniors won a competition at the Ashland Culinary Festival. Spirit activities included Festive Friday and Winter Wishes, during which many students had their wishes granted.

6.B. AEA Report

AEA member Alan Parowski read reports from the school sites. Ashland Connect is growing, its student enrollment. Most sites held year-end solstice or holiday events. AHS science classes are moving to Lincoln over winter break, along with some classes from the second floor of the Humanities Building, making way for more bond construction. Helman hosted a student affinity group luncheon attended by 42 students.

AEA members have expressed concerns about a shortage of educational assistants and, at AHS, the caseload carried by the counselors with the loss of one FTE. There are worries about their ability to handle mental and behavioral health needs.

6.C. OSEA Report

OSEA board member Steven Essig said that their negotiating team has done good work on several Memoranda of Understanding that have been approved and they look forward to posting them. Two more are pending and will be going out to members for ratification. One covers a revived emergency substitute provision enabling classified staff to step in when there are no available EA's, following proper training. The other is an MOU implementing the recently passed Senate Bill 756 giving classified employees a required role on support teams that develop plans for students with individualized educational plans.

Mr. Essig also acknowledged classified staff at AMS who are running craft stations, staffing Brain Bowl, building theater production sets, and retooling the Academic Support Center. All of these efforts provide direct support to students.

7. Board Reports

Director Hatch reported the special meeting with consultant Hank Harris to set criteria for the superintendent search and his co-chairing of the Innovation Committee on Calendar and Schedules. The committee is researching many creative options and he reported they are getting a robust response to their survey about these new ideas. Respondents are giving thoughtful reasons for their opinions on various options. Director Skuratowicz said that her committee on Reimagining High School also has a wonderful process. Members are taking their time, understanding that they may recommend some big decisions that will call upon others to make changes. The two committees plan to meet together soon, as the issues they are addressing are intertwined. Director Franko attended an Ashland Schools Foundation board meeting and joined TRAILS for a visit to Earth Teach, where students collected natural items to use for the annual Winter Fair. She also attended the Winter Fair.

Director Ruby participated in Board work sessions, meetings with community members, the TRAILS Parent Teacher Council, and quite a bit of housing subcommittee work for the Innovation Committee on Increasing Enrollment. Chair Dyson was excited to attend the Winter Fine Arts Fair at AHS. All students get to display their work in the arts, including visual, music, and performing arts. Ticket holders also have a dinner prepared by culinary students. This is the first year since pre-COVID that the Fair is back to full speed. She congratulated the students for a fine effort.

7.A. Report from Innovation Committee to Increase Enrollment

Volunteer and parent Krista Palmer introduced herself as a recent resident of Ashland, She is an occupational therapist and has been a community organizer with people experiencing homelessness. She wants to support the schools and has volunteered to help with this subcommittee focus on increasing affordable housing as one route to attracting more families with children to the community. Ms. Palmer presented a data recap of the district's decline in student enrollment and the demographic challenges facing us in the future. Ashland has one of the lowest percentages of resident families with children in Jackson County or the state. We have a deficit of affordable housing and that impacts the ability of young families to live here. Most students who leave our district go to other public schools in more affordable towns.

The subcommittee established an ambitious goal to add 154 students by, in part, generating more family housing. Ms. Palmer has done extensive research with efforts in other regions and the group is using the Jefferson Union School District in Daly City, California, as one model. They created an organization to build workforce housing and it started making plans in 2020. They now have a housing development underway with one section completed. Their focus is on housing for their school district staff.

The subcommittee has created a new nonprofit organization called Sunstone Housing Collaborative. The sunstone is the state stone of Oregon. They are applying for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and have already applied for a first grant. Director Franko just received notice that our grant has been approved, though we do not yet know the dollar amount. The request was for \$200,000 to use for start-up costs from Jackson Care Connect.

The subcommittee is percolating on many ideas and looking at creating housing on one or more parcels of land owned by the district. The vision includes a combination of rental housing and homes. The option of a community land trust is appealing. The City of Ashland

and SOU are both entertaining similar concepts and these institutions working in concert with the school district have an opportunity to create something new and special.

Oregon Governor Kotek has declared housing as one of her top priorities and there is money available for innovative work. These ideas are on a 5-year trajectory to see meaningful results, as the planning, permitting, design and build options can take quite a long time. First steps are to secure some professional help including a staff person, hire legal help to create bylaws and a master agreement with the school district, and seek additional funds.

This is a new model only recently being implemented in different parts of the country. Board members would be interested in seeing more details from some of the other groups and where available, some independent evaluation on their results. Sunstone's vision is to sell some land into a lane trust to generate a revenue stream for the school district. They have many questions and are taking slow steps to get started.

8. Student Representative Report

Ms. Vogel and Ms. Machala reported on the recent Helman community service day in which elementary students came to the high school and AHS students guided them in doing a community service project and some games. Leadership students are also having conversations about the idea of bringing back a School Resource Officer to the high school. They will have a meeting with Ashland Police Department officers in January to continue the conversation and have plans to survey students later. Ms. Machala reported that they attended a meeting of the AHS site council and were able to review student data. They also appreciated Noah Cott and Hank Stringer for attending weekly meetings of the AHS bond construction team. (Both Mr. Cott and Mr. Stringer were under the weather and not in attendance.)

9. Hear Public Comments (*The Ashland School District Board of Directors reserves this time for individuals to relay comments in writing to the Board regarding topics, not on the printed agenda.*)

Ms. Sarah Sol, a resident of Ashland and parent of students attending Bellview and AMS, spoke on school safety.

Ms. Marianna Zimmitti, a resident of Ashland, is a grandparent of two Ashland students. She spoke on school safety.

Ms. Natalie Sol, a resident of Ashland and step parent of two students, spoke on school safety.

Ms. Tia McLean, a resident of Ashland and ASD teacher, spoke on the need for more adequate state funding of education to cover the costs of recently approved legislation.

Ms. Erin Finney, a resident of Ashland and a teacher and parent of two students, spoke about the need for more high school counselors.

Ms. Lauren Jones, a resident of Ashland, and a parent and alumna of ASD, spoke about the need for more high school counselors.

10. District Staff Updates

10.A. Superintendent Report

Superintendent Bogdanove reported that staff and students are looking forward to Winter Break after a busy autumn. We are finally starting bond work on the AHS science building.

The District now has a team of five who are certified to conduct school safety audits. The team includes four ASD staff and APD officer Bon Stewart. On January 20, the founder and national trainer of the *I Love You Guys* protocol will do a workshop for Ashland staff and others in Medford. We are hoping to get a good turnout of people for this Saturday training and will provide some support.

As part of the budget remediation hiring freeze, we are leaving unfilled one FTE opening in the AHS counseling team. An effective school counseling program is important and the District will be filling some gaps by redeploying other staff resources to provide support to the high school. We hope to replace the FTE for the next school year.

The requirements associated with the recently passed Oregon Senate Bill 819 and other unexpected things (e.g., liability insurance premium) put us \$1 million over budget against this year's revenue projections. The Lead Team is combing all aspects of our operations for cost savings.

This week the Ashland Rotary Students of the Month for October and November were Tess Hobein and Aiden Espinoza. AHS music teacher Ivan Olinghouse brought AHS singers and musicians to do Christmas carols for the Rotarians. It was a fun holiday event.

10.B. Capital Bond

10.B.1) Monthly Bond Report - November 2023

HMK Program Director Mike Freeman, attending the meeting on Zoom, reported that bond meetings and reports are getting shorter, as so much work is now completed. There were community open houses held for Walker Elementary, Helman Elementary, Ashland Middle School, and TRAILS to show case the new buildings and renovation that has been done. The roofing team is still working on AMS moisture leaks, finding and sealing areas of weakness, and this work is still under warranty.

We are now starting on the science building modernization part of the Ashland High School Remediation Project and have put redesign documents out to bid. The contractor recommendation for this work will be on the January 11, 2024, agenda.

Some demolition will commence over winter break. Teams will also be moving the second-floor classrooms of the humanities building to Lincoln, and will start renovation work there. Most of the work here is essentially seismic retrofits, along with restroom renovations and HVAC and IT upgrades.

The science modernization is aimed at trying to make the space more usable, creating more modern spaces for the classrooms. This building will also have upgrades to HVAC, IT, and rest rooms. Most of the accessibility upgrades were completed last summer. The buildings will also have modern access controls, key card locks, etc. About 90% of the AHS rest rooms will have major renovations when all work is completed. This is a top priority for students and staff.

10.C. Student Success Act-Student Investment Account Grant

Assistant Superintendent Erika Bare presented the final approved grant application under the integrated grant application process for projected use of our Student Success Act funds. She

reviewed the goals and objectives listed in the application, which she presented in the previous meeting, as well as projected expenditures identified and progress measures we will use.

10.D. High School Success Act Grant

High School Principal Ben Bell presented the grant application for High School Success funds, also an element of the integrated application. He outlined each of the key measures with projected outcomes:

1. 9th Grade on track to graduate
2. Career Technical Education
3. Participation in Advanced Courses
4. Drop-out prevention and Credit Retrieval

Student representative Willa Vogel asked whether GED students are counted in our graduation rates? Principal Bell said while they are not counted in that measure, they can be counted in the 5-year completion rates. We support our GED students and value their achieving an important educational life goal.

10.E. Finance Report

10.E.1) Finance Report for the period ending November 30, 2023

Director of Business Services Scott Whitman presented the General Fund report. Revenues are on track, as November is the month in which property taxes are due and our revenue came in at 90% of projected receipts for the year. We are still trending with expenditures overspending at about \$1 million over budget. Some grant revenues were a bit higher than projected.

Director Hatch asked about the fiscal impact of SB819 and Mr. Whitman said to date the total is about \$500,000. It represents half of our projected deficit. In addition to extra personnel required, the mandate carries heavy soft costs for tracking and reporting. This pulls people from other work. Director Ruby asked about the projected ending balance of less than \$1 million and what measures were being taken now. Mr. Whitman said that we have instituted a hiring freeze for all but the most necessary positions and are looking for other cost cutting efforts. Mr. Hatch also asked whether higher property taxes could offset some of the deficit? Mr. Whitman said that property taxes are included in the state funding pool and under the equalization formula, if the district receives more money in taxes, our State School Fund allocation is reduced.

10.E.2) Audit Report for FY2021-2022

Mr. Whitman reported that we finally received our FY2022 audit report. One finding was related to the overspending of ESSER dollars. While an appropriation transfer in 2022 of \$5 million was authorized by the Board, the district overspent that and will need to restore that fund. The auditor also noted that the District kept cash balances in amounts that exceeded our loss coverage and made a recommendation to cover any potential cash loss in total. The audit report mentioned that, at the time the work was performed, regular password changes were not required of staff with access to financial records. That has already been rectified and all staff are now required to change passwords at least annually. Overall the District received a clean audit with no major deficiencies or findings.

11. Unfinished Business

11.A. Board Policy IGDJ Interscholastic Activities Second Reading

Superintendent Bogdanove said that he added some language identifying the two major associations with which the District works on student activities. There may be other smaller ones getting occasional use. He also stated that the District will **annually** review athletic activities and associated organizations to ensure compliance with the policy.

Director Skuratowicz moved the approval of the policy as amended and Director Ruby seconded the motion, which carried with a unanimous vote of the members.

11.B. 2024-2025 Budget Committee Recruitment

11.B.1) Proposed Budget Calendar for 2024-2025

Director of Business Services Whitman presented the proposed calendar for review and approval of the 2024-2025 budget. The first meeting of the Budget Committee is slated for April 17 at 7:00 pm at the District Office.

11.B.2) Applications to Serve on the Budget Committee

Directors requested more time to review the applications received, along with another expected to come in, and deferred the vote. They also asked that the retiring members Caudle and Pistole be queried about their interest in continuing.

11.C. OSBA Annual Elections Ballot

Chair Dyson called for a vote on the Southern Region's candidate for the OSBA Legislative Policy Committee and Sara Crawford received the unanimous vote of the members.

She then called for the vote on the OSBA Resolution 1 to create the Oregon Rural School Board Members Caucus and designate a seat on the OSBA Board of Directors and Legislative Policy Committee for that caucus. The directors voted as follows:

Director Dyson- No
Director Franko - No
Director Hatch – No
Director Ruby – Yes
Director Skuratowicz – No

Chair Dyson called for a vote on Resolution 2 to adopt the proposed amendments to the OSBA Bylaws that would enable the change in Resolution 1. The directors voted as follows:

Director Dyson – No
Director Franko – No
Director Hatch – No
Director Ruby – Yes
Director Skuratowicz – No

12. New Business

There was none.

13. Announcements and Appointments

Chair Dyson read the announcements of upcoming meetings.

14. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Dyson adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: January 11, 2024

Board Chair Rebecca Dyson

Superintendent Samuel Bogdanove