

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Check

Vice Chair Jill Franko called the meeting to order and a roll check confirmed that four directors were present: Directors Hatch, Ruby, Skuratowicz and Franko. Director Dyson was absent.

2. Land Acknowledgment

Director Skuratowicz read the Land Acknowledgment.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Director Ruby moved and Director Skuratowicz seconded the adoption of the October 12 agenda as presented. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

4. Consent Agenda

Director Hatch moved and Director Ruby seconded approval of the Consent Agenda. Discussion followed. Director Skuratowicz asked for additional time to review the changes to Board policies and a consensus of the members affirmed that all of the Board Policy Updates in item 4F be moved to the November consent agenda. The remaining items 4A. through 4E. were approved as presented.

4.A. Approval of Minutes for the September 14, 2023, regular session and the September 28, 2023, Special Session.

4.B. Personnel Report for October 2023

4.C. Enrollment Report for October 2, 2023

4.D. Superintendent Search Timeline Updated October 12.2023

4.E. ASD-OSEA Memorandum of Understanding Establishing a New Pay Date for Classified Employees beginning September 2023

4.F. Board Policy Updates

4.F.1) **Policy AC** Nondiscrimination

4.F.2) **Policy GBA** Equal Employment Opportunity

4.F.3) **Policy IGBHA** Alternative Education Programs

4.F.4) **Policy IL** Assessment Program

4.F.5) **Policy JB** Equal Educational Opportunity

4.F.6) **Policy JFCF** Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Menacing, Cyberbullying, Teen Dating Violence, or Domestic Violence – Students

5. School Report - Ashland Connect

Principal Jennifer Parks presented the current program of Ashland Connect, which she described as a hybrid program combining online and in person learning. The program uses a personalized approach to learning for each student. Ashland Connect works in partnerships with organizations like Science Works and Rogue Valley Farm to School. Families and students can pick their own schedules. The students can participate in extra-curricular activities, Special Education offerings, and other services. The program is flexible and adaptable to community needs. Ashland Connect began in 2020 and planning engaged a broad group of interested participants. It launched in 2021 with the goal of giving families choices to meet their needs.

The program has become a showcase for all components of the school district working together. There is room to grow enrollment and Principal Parks wants to let the community know about the availability of Connect. Enrollment is already growing and more students are taking advantage of in-person offerings and services.

The discussion that followed touched on the following points:

- The Board appreciated the innovative offerings and commitment to growing enrollment.
- This creative program should help the district recruit and retain new families.
- We should do more marketing of Ashland Connect.
- The capacity is ample for the near future and the program can accept students outside of district boundaries. It could probably absorb at least 35 students with a full-time teacher and added support services.
- Ms. Parks and teacher Amanda Groover are working to complete the formal adoption of the online curriculum as required by the State.
- They maintain a learning relationship with SOESD and a group of other district online programs.

6. Recurring Reports

6.A. AHS Student Report

Hank Stringer reported on recent activities including attendance at a Career Trade Expo in Canyonville, a Cornhole Tournament in the quad, and student Capstone projects. Noah Cott mentioned senior nights, the success of soccer teams, and the upcoming “Haunted Homecoming Dance.”

6.B. OSEA Report

Steven Essig said that OSEA was celebrating School Lunch Week with students and staff. During staff wellness day, they had good sessions and attended a recent session on Family Engagement. He also reported that AHS had the highest FAFSA (college student financial aid application) completion in Oregon and credited Transition Specialist Jen Marsden’s good work. He also commended the high school staff who confronted a hate group picket line on LGBTQ+ Pride Day. OSEA would like to recruit classified staff to participate in the new Board Innovation Committees, mentioning one devoted to school calendars and schedules, and another working to “reimagine high school.”

6.C. AEA Report

Alan Parowski read brief highlights from AEA members at each of the schools. All held community-building activities and celebrations of various kinds. A shared concern is our shortage of substitutes for both certified staff and education assistants.

6.D. Ashland Schools Foundation

ASF Executive Director Erica Thompson reported the Foundation has added several new board members, including Director Franko as a school board liaison. The Foundation held its first round of impact grants and funded 38 requests for a total of \$20,000. The next deadlines to apply are November 29, 2023, and February 21, 2024. Ms. Thompson also reported on the annual Monster Dash, the ASF fall fund raising event. This year will feature a Fun Run and family activities, including a silent auction. She encouraged district staff to volunteer and receive a registration discount.

7. **Board Reports**

Director Ruby reported that he participated in the Board work session, has done some research for the Board's Innovation/Enrollment committee, and joined in discussions about our upcoming superintendent search. Director Skuratowicz reported that the Innovation/Reimagine High School group is having presentations from people with great ideas, and enjoying a creative period of discussion. They meet again next week. She presented to AAUW with Assistant Superintendent Erika Bare on our big ideas about potential innovations at ASD. Our community has great resources, including people who want to help schools.

Director Hatch said that the Innovation/Calendar Committee is still focused on research, and he is working with a great group of volunteers. He attended the consultation with Hank Harris of Human Capital Enterprises, our superintendent search consultant. He also reported on an event that RVTD organized, a "bike bus" in which two dozen families rode through town as a group. This will be a regular event focused on bike safety training and will happen on first Fridays. Director Franko said that the Innovation Committee/Increasing Enrollment has three subcommittees focused on marketing, growing Ashland Connect, and generating more affordable housing. The full group is meeting monthly in person with subcommittees doing research and also meeting monthly. She joined the ASF Board and attended her first meeting. She went on a recent TRAILS outdoor trip, which was amazing. Students focused on water, hikes, and social and emotional learning aspects.

8. **Student Representative Report**

Noah Cott and Willa Vogel reported on the high school's recent focus on the idea of bringing back School Resource Officers. They had three APD teams participate in the recent cornhole tournament. Student leaders want to involve officers in school activities to socialize their campus presence. Some students had mixed reactions to the presence of officers and Willa reported that she saw some students engaging with officers positively. They consider it a powerful interaction with the school community.

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.*)

Tia McLean, teacher and AEA President, spoke about the need for substitute teachers and educational assistants.

10. District Staff Updates

10.A. Superintendent Report

10.A.1) Division 22 Assurances Report for 2022-2023. Superintendent Bogdanove presented the Division 22 Assurances Report for the 2022-2023 school year recently completed. He said that overall the District has a very successful record of compliance with the list of performance standards selected for review for that year. He mentioned three areas where the District is implementing corrective action plans:

1. Achieving the new standards for PE Minutes required weekly in middle school. There is an approved plan in place that will involve some restructuring of the AMS schedule and reducing the number of electives in order to free the time for additional minutes of PE.
2. Completing a deferred curriculum adoption process for the Ashland Connect's online instructional materials. The process will be completed in the 2023-24 academic year.
3. Completing the English Language Arts instructional materials adoption, which the District delayed in order to focus on the training for and robust implementation of our new K-12 math curriculum. This will be completed in the 2024-2025 school year.

10.B. Transportation Update

Transportation Director Stacey Cheshire presented a brief update on her department, reporting that the district is in good shape with the number of available drivers. We will have our first state compliance audit this year and she does not expect any problems. We have a great team and all the routes are running smoothly.

She reported on her research into future use of electric buses. She recently attended a conference in Reno focused on electric buses. Some Oregon school districts are moving into more extensive use of these. An example is Beaverton, currently operating 25 buses on good terrain.

Ms. Cheshire has reached out to Pacific Power to assess the transportation lot for installation of the chargers required to charge buses. She is working with colleagues to seek grants to support installation of charging stations and related infrastructure. She estimates that it will take up to 18 months just to do this.

She talked with Peterson Bus Company in Albany and one of their people brought an E-bus down here. The trip required frequent charging including Albany to Springfield for 2 hours, then to Sutherlin for another 2 hours, then to Grants Pass for 2 hours, then to Ashland. With current technology, we could not do a round trip to Eagle Point or Grants Pass on one charge. This will be a slow change and take time. The district will use the buses first on local, relatively flat routes.

Pacific Power estimated that our bus barn lot would need another power pole, transformer, and trench for chargers. We want to prepare for the future and the cost of this work alone is estimated at \$175,000. Buses cost \$350,000-400,000. Currently a propane bus costs \$148,000 and a Diesel bus about \$200,000 equipped with air conditioning. We are making gradual moves. We are running five propane buses now in town. We do use diesel on mountain routes and we run them as cleanly as we can.

The Board expressed its appreciation to Ms. Cheshire for starting this work. Ms. Cheshire stated that it will be important to choose the right manufacturer when we begin purchasing and she is watching the experiences of other school districts.

10.C. Capital Bond

10.C.1) Monthly Bond Report for September 2023

Executive Director of Operations Steve Mitzel reported that the District is beginning to explore electric vehicles for the maintenance fleet. They want to move towards reducing combustion engine vehicles. Director Skuratowicz reported that SOU has taken steps to do this and Mr. Mitzel expressed his willingness to connect with counterparts there. We are looking for opportunities to make changes.

HMK Program Director Mike Freeman reported that the AHS team is moving back from its accelerated pace of the summer, as students return. Construction crews have shifted to evening work to keep the most disruptive operations after school hours, while also remaining mindful of residential neighbors. Seismic upgrades have been completed on the first floor of the Humanities building and are moving to second floor. The priorities are mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.

On the solar field, the ground array is now in place. Remaining control systems should arrive in February and the project can be completed. AMS replanted the area where modulators were located, and completed some irrigation upgrades. At Bellview we are completing HVAC installations, working outside of school hours. The project is now on pause until chillers and boilers arrive to be installed.

Director Skuratowicz asked the student representatives if the work at the high school has been disruptive and they said it is generally not too bad, and that the crews are doing a great job. Outlier Construction has effectively walled off construction spaces and workers shifted their work schedules to avoid making loud noise during school days. Our contractors have been very cooperative. The teams have done the best phasing we could manage. We did add a small number of parking spaces at SOU for students in response to student concerns.

Director Ruby asked how many Kilowatt hours would be generated by the solar array. Mr. Mitzel said that it would generate about 76% of the power usage at AMS and TRAILS, offsetting energy provided through Ashland Power.

10.C.2) Recommendation to Award

Mr. Freeman presented the HMK recommendation to award the CM|GC GMP Amendment 4 for the Ashland High School Science and Humanities Modernization Project to KNCC + Outlier, LLC (KNO) for the additional Not to Exceed sum of \$2,450,682.00 for a Total Not to Exceed Contract sum of \$12,198,405.00.

Director Ruby moved and Director Skuratowicz seconded approval of this recommendation. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of 4-0.

Mr. Mitzel stated that they AHS construction team invites student participation at the monthly construction meetings, which will focus on the next stage of planning. Interested students should reach out to him.

10.D. Finance Report

10.D.1) Finance Report for the period ending September 30, 2023

Director of Business Services Scott Whitman reported September general fund revenue year-to-date of about \$4.8 million, which is ahead of the prior year for the same period. However, our expenditures exceeded revenue last year and our projected budget for this year accelerates that trend. We are continuing to spend at a rate that is projected to further reduce our ending fund balance from \$2,007,970 at June 30, 2023, to \$971,144 this year. This brings our mandated 8% reserve down to less than 3% at the end of this year. We are continuing to outspend our income.

Mr. Whitman outlined some new factors contributing to increasing overspending:

- District Property Insurance premium increased by more than \$200,000 over last year. The recent property audit generated increased assessments for the buildings resulting from new bond construction.
- \$400,000 is the estimated cost that results from SB819 mandating full days of instruction for most SPED students. Many students in this category require full adult supervision and support every day, which added staffing costs.
- \$100K is the annual charge for our new math curriculum, which will be expensed over multiple years.
- Other cost drivers include the growing expense of salaries for certified staff. As we replace retiring or leaving staff, we are hiring more experienced and expensive staff, rather than younger lower paid staff. Our significant over-spending is in HR – we are paying more people than we can afford, represented by the 85% of our budget going to staff. We need to reduce to an industry norm of 80% in total compensation. We also maintain some of the lowest class sizes in the region.

11. **Unfinished Business**

There was none.

12. **New Business**

There was none.

13. **Announcements and Appointments**

Vice Chair Franko read the announcements of upcoming meetings.

14. Adjourn

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

Submitted by:

Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: November 9, 2023

Vice Chair Jill Franko

Superintendent Samuel Bogdanove