

ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Regular Meeting and Executive Session Via Zoom

1419 NW Valley View Drive
Roseburg, Oregon

Vol 2 No. 13

January 6, 2021

Board Members:

Brandon Bishop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rodney Cotton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Micki Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Howard Johnson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rebecca Larson, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charles F. Lee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Patterson, Vice Chair	Excused

Administration:

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Burton, Director of Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michelle Knee, Assistant Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheryl Northam, Chief Operations Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

TIME/PLACE: A regular meeting of the Douglas County School District No. 4 Board of Directors was held at 6:02 p.m. via Zoom on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, in the Administrative Office Board Room, located at 1419 NW Valley View Drive in Roseburg, Oregon, via Zoom link.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board Chair Rebecca Larson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and welcomed Zoom participants. Director Brandon Bishop led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE: Board and Cabinet members were in attendance via Zoom. Superintendent Cordon and Assistant Superintendent, Michelle Knee were on site. Jared announced that Vice Chair Patterson will not be able to join this meeting and is excused. Education reporter, Sanne Godfrey joined the meeting via Zoom.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD / REVIEW OF AGENDA

Superintendent Cordon wished the entire Board a Happy School Board Recognition Month and thanked them for all they do for our community and for the kids.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Consent Agenda was presented, consisting of Approval of the Consent Agenda, Minutes from the December 16th School Board Meeting, Gifts to the District and the following employment recommendations:

Recommendations for Employment:

- Tristan Reustle-Church, Third Grade Online Instruction, a temporary position for the 2020-21 school year

Notice of Resignation:

- Jayme Malkowski, Second Grade Teacher at Green Elementary, resigning after one year in the district for family reasons.

Director Brandon Bishop Moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Director Micki Hall seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

M2-69 Approved the Consent Agenda

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH

Board Chair Larson announced that the month of January is School Board Recognition Month and introduced the Honorable Larry Rich, Mayor of Roseburg. Mayor Rich thanked the Roseburg Board of Education for generously volunteering their time in support of our students and shared a proclamation on behalf of the community declaring January 2021 as School Board Recognition Month.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Chair Larson opened the Public Participation portion of the meeting by reminding those in attendance that the members of the Board are volunteers, and that the intent of this meeting is to conduct Board Business. Chair Larson explained that during this portion of the meeting, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Knee will be managing the comment process and that participants will be allotted a maximum of two minutes for their statements. If people would like more than two minutes they are encouraged to call and make an appointment.

Camron Pope, (no address provided) President of Roseburg Education Association, shared that teachers would like to extend their appreciation and gratitude and are aware that this evening the Board will be making a decision that is unpopular, but that will be fair and safe for both students and staff. Mr. Pope noted that teachers are concerned, for their students whose needs are not being met, as well as their own personal health and the health of their families and their student’s families. The decision to reopen must be inclusive of the full district at the same time. The teachers are in agreement that January 25, 2021, is the best option.

Lindsey Stanton (no address provided) stated that as a long-standing community member and a parent of students in the district, she is grateful for the work the Board does. Mrs. Stanton is of the opinion that getting school open ASAP is the best idea, but is in agreement with opening on January 25, 2021 for all grade levels.

Christina Moroney (no address provided), a teacher at RHS asked that the Board please continue following the metrics and wait until the vaccination is available for teachers.

Nathan Eckman (no address provided, a teacher at RHS, also asked that the Board wait until the vaccination is available for staff, there are even fewer case numbers, students have been trained on safety protocols, and that actions such as more testing, temperatures taken before students enter schools and air purification systems for classrooms, are put into action.

Lisa Doggett (no address provided) is a parent, asked that when deciding on the reopening date, the Board consider not only the physical, but also the mental health of students.

Mary Eckman (no address provided), a teacher at RHS expressed her thanks to the Board for their service and recognized that their work is not easy. Mrs. Eckman asked the Board to please consider keeping distance learning in place until it is safe for staff and students.

Guion Randol (no address provided), a community member, would like to see students back in class ASAP. Mr. Randol acknowledged that the decision is up to the Board, but questioned why other districts are open, but ours is not.

Kristy Hiers (no address provided), a teacher and a parent, noted that we had K-3 students in the buildings and the precautions taken did not lead to a spread of the virus. She emphasized that we need the kids back in the schools.

Xavier Moroney (no address provided), the spouse of a teacher, understands that both kids and teachers want to be back, but we need to wait until the vaccine is available.

Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Ricks (no address provided), community members, feel that the district needs to talk about options for physical and mental health, but agree that January 25th is an acceptable option.

Jennifer Eames (no address provided), an elementary school teacher as well as a parent, noted that when the K-3 students were in the buildings, there was not a spread of the virus. Mrs. Eames is advocating for opening now.

Dawn Reneau (no address provided), a district parent, would like the schools to open now as they are not super spreader events. Mrs. Reneau would like the original plan put back in place and wants the options to be in-person or online, no hybrid.

Jan Patton (no address provided), representative for Douglas County foster families and grandparent, would like students back to school ASAP and acknowledges the science on both sides of the argument.

William Willis (no address provided), a student at RHS, would like to go back ASAP.

Vanessa M (no address provided), a parent, acknowledged that her children have had good teachers so far and likes the LIPI option, but would also like students to be able to go back ASAP.

Pam Menzie (no address provided), first grade teacher at Green Elementary, would like to be able to have her kids back and meet with them up close rather than at a distance.

Tracy Leder (no address provided), a parent and an RN, advocated for students to return ASAP to address student mental health concerns.

Patricia Gausnell (no address provided), community member, would like students back to school ASAP.

Rachel Nielsen (no address provided), parent, expressed her gratitude to the Board for their work and the hard decisions they have to make. Mrs. Nielsen advocated for the return of students to schools ASAP.

Angelee Kenyon (no address provided), a teacher, acknowledged that everyone cares about the mental and academic health of students. Ms. Kenyon noted that while kids are not getting the virus, family members are. Distance learning is a good option for kids, but it takes the safety option away from educators.

Kevin (no address provided), local First Responder, parent and COVID-19 survivor, would like kids to go back to school right away.

Chair Larson expressed her thanks for everyone's thoughts and comments and explained that the Board has looked at the many options and will consider these in their decision, prior to turning the discussion over to Superintendent Cordon.

SCHOOL REOPENING DISCUSSION

Superintendent Cordon opened his presentation by expressing his appreciation for living in a community where people care so much about the kids. Jared also acknowledged that there are no absolutes on the topic of reopening and there will be no judgement or contempt for feelings. We all want the same things: a strong, safe, quality education for all. Superintendent Cordon shared a presentation of the three options for reopening the District's schools:

Option One – Kindergarten – 3rd grade returns to in-person learning full-time on January 11; Grades 4 – 5 begin full-time on January 14; and Grades 6 – 12 begin in-person hybrid learning on January 25.

Option Two – All grades return on January 25 with Kindergarten – 5th grade full-time in-person and grades 6 – 12 returning hybrid in-person.

Option Three – All grades will return on February 16 with Kindergarten – 5th grade full-time in-person and grades 6 – 12 returning hybrid in-person.

In considering our options, Superintendent Cordon noted that the priorities of the district have not changed. We are still looking out for student and staff safety, student learning and care. We have also continued to follow on going measures regarding safety and learning needs.

Following Superintendent Cordon's presentation, Chair Larson opened the floor for her fellow Board members to consider a motion.

Director Micki Hall moved to approve Option Two for all students to return to in-person/hybrid learning on January 25th. Director Rod Cotton seconded the Motion. Prior to voting on this Motion, the Directors in attendance discussed this option as well as the others under consideration

Director Hall noted that the Board is responsible for taking care of a number of different kinds of stakeholders throughout the district and that like everyone district-wide, the first priority is taking care of all of the students and getting them back to school. Director Hall noted that while originally, she was in favor of Option Three, as she is concerned about the post New Year's surge that has not happened yet and the availability of the vaccine. With the news from Superintendent Cordon that there is a potential for the vaccine to be made available by the end of January, Director Hall recommended that everyone contact the public health department and advocate for the vaccine to be made available to teachers before the end of January. Micki expressed that she is open to whatever the Board chooses, but she feels that Option Two is equitable for teachers and students alike, provides an opportunity for access to the vaccine, and allows us to obtain the upcoming guidance from the State and seeing what the new surge might bring.

Director Bishop acknowledged that his preference is for Option One, but he will support Option Two. Dr. Bishop reiterated the statistic provided by Superintendent Cordon that there have not been any cases contracted at a majority of Douglas County schools, and currently approximately 30% of the students at RHS are failing at least one class and as such we need to get students back to school. Director Hall noted that with the end of the 1st semester in the near future, this number is not out of the ordinary.

Chair Larson acknowledged that she, too, would prefer Option One, making it a priority to get the elementary students back in school and then the secondary at the semester break, but she can support Option 2. Rebecca noted that many of our students are falling through the cracks in spite of the efforts being made by teachers. Chair Larson expressed that she too is in favor of encouraging people to contact public health to get those teachers who want to be vaccinated, the opportunity to do so before the end of January.

Director Cotton noted that felt equally good about both Option One and Option Two, but leans more toward Option Two. As well, Mr. Cotton would like to see us have a couple of weeks to get past the New Year's surge.

Director Lee expressed his concerns regarding the Governor's guidelines regarding social distancing and asked about options for addressing vulnerability of staff. Human Resources Director Robert Freeman responded that his department will work with staff to determine the best option to address their ability to do their jobs. Director Lee also expressed his concern about the vaccine and the fact that two doses are required, and questioned whether or not January 25th is a feasible option. Director Hall shared her understanding that a single dose provides immunity. Director Bishop noted that two weeks after the vaccination is given, there is significant immunity. Superintendent Cordon acknowledged that the information from public health has not given a firm date at this time, but that based on the number of education staff county-wide and the number of vaccines that can be administered per day, it could take approximately 20 days to complete. Additionally, Director Lee expressed that it is his understanding that public health has not been able to do very good contact tracing and as such he is concerned with the fact that this is really the only protection against community spread. Director Lee then questioned whether or not we will be changing and/or updating our ventilation system. Chief Operations Officer Cheryl Northam explained that there has been research done on air purification and a couple of options are available, but the cost is high. Director Lee asked if we could obtain units by the reopening date and Mrs. Northam explained that this would depend on approval of an emergency purchase order.

Director Johnson expressed that his preference is for Option Two, but is concerned about the potential for liability if we open and there is not consistency with all parties following the prescribed guidelines.

Vice Chair Patterson was unable to attend this meeting, but both Superintendent Cordon and Chair Larson have spoken with him and he is in agreement with Option Two.

The Motion passed by a majority of five votes in favor and Director Lee voting against, to return students to school on January 25, 2021.

M2-70 Approved the Reopening Plan

FREMONT SEISMIC PROJECT MANAGER

Purchasing Supervisor Denny Austin presented the details of the RFP for Project Manager – Fremont Seismic Upgrade. Due to the fact that the Board Meeting date was moved up a week, the selection committee (as of the time of the meeting) had not completed the reference checks on the three finalists.

Director Hall moved to direct the staff to complete reference checks as scheduled, and to publish in accordance with the timeline, a Notice of Intent to Award on January 13, 2021 (our original Board meeting date) and begin negotiations with the firm scoring the highest combined evaluation and reference scores, January 14, 2021. Director Bishop seconded.

The motion to direct the committee to continue with the reference checks was withdrawn and action was

postponed until January 13th when Mr. Austin will present the final results, at which time administration may be directed to proceed with the Notice of Intent to Award.

M2-71 Approval of Fremont Middle School Seismic Project Manager – POSTPONED TO JANUARY 13, 2021 BOARD MEETING

APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-21-11: SIGNING AUTHORITY TO PURCHASE PROPERTY

Resolution 20-21-11 authorizes Chief Operations Officer, Cheryl Northam, to have signing authority for the purchase of real estate at 354 W Selmar Ct. and 365 W Selmar Ct.

Director Charles Lee moved to approve Resolution 20-21-11. Director Micki Hall seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

M2-72 Approved Resolution 20-21-11: Authorizing Signing Authority for COO Northam to Purchase Property
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SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Cordon thanked the Board for all of the work they do for the kids in our community and wished them a Happy Board Appreciation Month, adding that it is odd not being together to honor them with a celebration.

INDIVIDUAL REPORTS BY DIRECTORS

Director Hall shared a very heartfelt message acknowledging all of the wonderful things that the School Board, students, parents, District staff and community as a whole have done over the course of the last year, from making adjustments in teaching and learning styles; providing computers, books, assignments and WiFi when needed; delivering thousands of meals to families; providing day care to first responders and front line workers; holding a virtual graduation and distributing lawn signs for all graduates; parades for elementary students to acknowledge their birthday and connect with their teachers; videos were produced to connect the middle school students and staff; and even ran a Bond measure, that lost by a narrow margin. Director Hall noted that all of these accomplishments were completed with compassion, empathy, equity and learning and have gotten us through these trying times.

Director Bishop expressed how fortunate he is to be a member of this School Board and that patience and grace are what everyone needs to keep in mind when dealing with an opinion that differs from their own.

Director Johnson agreed with Director Hall and expressed his thanks to Janet and the Superintendent’s Office staff for making sure materials are always delivered.

Director Cotton acknowledged how proud he is to have been part of this organization’s Board for the past 27 years, and thanked Director Hall for her message.

Chair Larson concurred that Director Hall’s words said it best. Chair Larson also expressed what an honor it has been to serve with her fellow Board members, learning from them and their selfless acts. Rebecca noted that she is grateful to be part of this community.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chair Larson opened the floor to community members wishing to address the Board:

Richard Bader (no address given), community member, expressed his concern for the SpEd students and how their needs are being met during the pandemic.

Cary Sanders (no address given), parent of six children in the district, would like to see kids back in school and have the district rely upon data rather than emotions.

Rachel Jackson (no address given), an RHS teacher, thanked the Board for their dedication to the District. Rachel asked that the Board reconsider this vote if the vaccinations are not available by January 25th.

Kevin (no address given), community member, asked the Board to follow their beliefs when making a decision.

Joe (no address given), parent of a Fremont Middle School student, expressed his appreciation to Fremont Middle School staff as well as the School Board for doing a great job.

ADJOURNMENT: With all business before the Board concluded, Chair Larson recessed the regular meeting at 8:10 p.m. to convene an Executive Session. Participants in the Zoom session were informed that they could remain in the “waiting room” if they wished to address the Board during Public Participation following the conclusion of the Executive Session.

BOARD EXECUTIVE SESSION

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Rebecca Larson brought the Board Executive Session to order at 8:12 p.m. in accordance with ORS 192.660(2)(i). Attendance included the School Board and Superintendent Cordon. Education Reporter Sanne Godfrey also remained in attendance. The Board and Superintendent discussed the Superintendent’s upcoming Evaluation.

Chair Larson adjourned the Executive Session at 8:22 p.m. and reconvened the regular meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chair Larson inquired if there was anyone remaining in the waiting room who wished to address the Board; there were no individuals.

Chair Larson thanked everyone for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT: With all business before the Board concluded, Chair Larson adjourned the regular meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
JPC/sdt

Next Meeting: January 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office Board Room, located at 1419 NW Valley View Drive in Roseburg Oregon via Zoom link.