

ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Regular Meeting Roseburg High School – The Rose Theatre 400 West Harvard Avenue in Roseburg, Oregon

Vol 2 No. 15

January 27, 2021

Board Members:

Dr. Brandon Bishop
Rodney Cotton
Micki Hall
Rev. Howard Johnson
Rebecca Larson, Chair
Charles F. Lee
Steve Patterson, Vice Chair



Administration:

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
Richard Burton, Director of Student Services
Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources
Michelle Knee, Assistant Superintendent
Cheryl Northam, Chief Operations Officer



Exc.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

TIME/PLACE: A regular meeting of the Douglas County School District No. 4 Board of Directors was held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, in The Rose Theatre on the campus of Roseburg High School, located at 400 W. Harvard Avenue in Roseburg, Oregon, in person, accompanied by live streaming.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board Chair Rebecca Larson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees. To ensure that those observing via live streaming could hear, Chair Larson encouraged her colleagues to raise their hand if they wished to speak so that the audio system could track the conversation. Director Steve Patterson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE: Board and Cabinet members attended in person. Most were present on site, with Chief Operations Officer, Cheryl Northam, excused. Education reporter, Sanne Godfrey and RHS Leadership student, Marin Gray, also attended in person.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD / REVIEW OF AGENDA

Superintendent Cordon addressed the Board, informing them that Phoenix Charter School administrators had declined the invitation for their periodic check-in, which will be rescheduled. With no applications for the vacant position on the District Budget Committee, that action item was stricken from the agenda as well. An action item for Approval for Notice of Intent to Award CM/GC for the Fremont Middle School Seismic Project was a late addition to the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Consent Agenda was presented, consisting of Approval of the Consent Agenda, Minutes from Board Meeting of January 13, 2021, Gifts to the District and Surplus Items Listing, along with the following personnel actions:

Recommendations for employment (temporary contracts for 2020-2021) included:

Licensed Staff:

- Bridget Batsch, Fifth Grade Teacher at Fir Grove Elementary School, a temporary position for the 2020-2021 school year. Bridget retired from the District in 2018 after 32 years;
- Christine Backen, Fourth Grade .5 time Teaching and Learning Support Specialist, at Fir Grove Elementary School, a temporary position for the 2020-2021 school year. Chris retired from the District in 2020 after 34 years;
- Carolyn “Jean” Christensen, a Fifth Grade CDL position for the Department of Teaching and Learning, a temporary position for the 2020-21 school year. Jean retired from the District in 2013 after 22 years; and
- Yuka Matsuzoe Latham, Fourth Grade CDL, for the Department of Teaching and Learning. This is a temporary position for the 2020-21 school year.

Resignation:

- Peter Lindstrom, Science Teacher at RHS for 17 years, submitted his resignation to the Board for PERS retirement purposes September 9, 2020, requesting to finish the school year. Mr. Lindstrom has now expressed his wishes to resign from the District effective January 25, 2021.

Director Micki Hall moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Director Steve Patterson seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

M2-75 Approved the Consent Agenda

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Chair Larson opened the Public Participation portion of the meeting, noting that anyone present wishing to address the Board would be alerted by Assistant Superintendent Michelle Knee once the two-minute time limitation approached to allow the speaker to conclude their thoughts. An additional opportunity for public comment will be provided at the end of the regular meeting. No attendees accepted the invitation to address the Board.

APPROVAL OF NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD CM/GC FOR FREMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL SEISMIC PROJECT

Purchasing Supervisor Denny Austin noted that this is the final step for public input opportunities related to the seismic upgrade at Fremont Middle School. As outlined in Mr. Austin’s memo, two firms submitted qualifying responses to the published RFP 20-694 for Contract Management/General Contractor (CM/GC) Services for Seismic Rehabilitation at Fremont Middle School.

The evaluation team completed their evaluation of the proposals using the requirements posted in the RFP, and is now recommending the Board award a contract for CM/GC to the highest scoring responsive, responsible proposer, S+B James.

Director Micki Hall moved to award a contract for CM/GC to S+B James, and direct staff to publish a Notice of Intent to Award as provided for in the RFP. Director Brandon Bishop seconded and the Motion passed unanimously.

M2-76 Approved selection of S+B James for CM/GC Services for Seismic Rehabilitation at Fremont Middle School, and directed staff to publish its Notice of Intent to Award as provided for in RFP 20-694

BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT GOALS – PROGRESS REPORT

Superintendent Cordon shared his intent to spend some time this evening reviewing the Board and Superintendent Goals and to provide the opportunity for Board members to ask questions about where we are in our processes.

RHS / Rose Transition

Roseburg High School Principal Jill Weber and Rose Principal Randal Olsen shared their combined vision for integrating Rose students into RHS, focusing on the increased opportunities these students will be encouraged to access. Mr. Olsen noted that the Strategic Plan is centered on equitable student experiences, and staff began conversations a year ago about what RHS might look like a 100 years from now. As the vision evolved, Randal reported that bi-weekly focused outreach to the families of our Rose students was initiated to assure everyone involved had a voice and hopefully helped to alleviate anxiety regarding the upcoming transition.

Principal Weber presented a color-coded flow chart illustrating the various tiers involved in determining appropriate supports, including both acceleration and recovery, for our students transitioning to RHS. Jill described the overall vision of having every student that leaves RHS finishing and having a plan for the next steps in life. Superintendent Cordon commended Jill, Randal and Michelle Knee for shepherding this endeavor, stating that this is an example of an organization with a belief in doing those things that work for kids. A student's success should not depend on socio/economics, the color of their skin or the zip code where they live.

Graduation Rates

Principal Weber was very pleased to announce that in 2020, Roseburg High School's graduation rate reached 86.1 percent, the highest ever. Jill encouraged our local community, schools, families and kids to share in our pride in this accomplishment, adding that the results are not due to one thing, but instead are the result of years of supporting kids. Jill explained that RHS set a goal of 85% graduation about three years ago, and the high school staff collaborates with the middle schools to identify those students needing additional support even before their entry into RHS. The high school team focuses on connections and supports, helps students set high expectations and provides a school climate and focus that ensures every child finishes their four years at the high school with a plan for their next steps in life. This year's senior class are 90% on track for graduation. Superintendent Cordon emphasized that this is not something that RHS can shoulder alone, but is instead a Pre-K – Grade 12 combined responsibility.

Roseburg Public Schools Virtual School

Assistant Superintendent, Michelle Knee, outlined the proposal to begin offering our student families a choice by establishing a K-5 virtual school utilizing a standalone learning platform and RPS teachers. At the secondary level, we are initially planning to utilize the Apex program and teachers, transitioning to RPS teachers beginning in the 2022-23 school year for grades 6-12. Michelle provided assurance that our progress in this area will be closely monitored with appropriate adjustments made going forward.

Reopening Update

Superintendent Cordon announced that K-5 students were welcomed back to school this week, with grades 6-12 beginning next Monday. Staff have the technology and training needed to provide in-person hybrid options as well as remote options on Monday. Jared expressed appreciation for our School Board staying the course as our district followed the metrics and guidelines, even when it was uncomfortable to do so. In spite of all the safety/distancing/sanitation precautions necessary to do what's right for community health, safety of kids and staff, students were thrilled to be back. Jared expressed "kudos" to parents and kids, adding that staff has done an incredible job meeting their needs.

RHS Mascot – Process

The Superintendent led the Board through a proposed process regarding discussion of our RHS mascot. Jared explained that the purpose tonight is to consider processes that could be embraced to help determine the next steps moving forward. A Phase One subcommittee is being established to focus on a plan to determine an information gathering process. The mascot subcommittee will share their information with the Board during the February 10th School Board Meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

School Board Appreciation Month

Superintendent Cordon expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with a School Board that understands the meaning of leadership and has been able to focus on those things that matter most. This community values the critical volunteer work put forth by our Board of Education. Jared thanked the Board for the time they dedicate to helping our kids and staff continue to move forward.

The Superintendent shared that a vaccine clinic has been scheduled at the Douglas County Fairgrounds on Saturday, with an Eventbrite signup initiated this afternoon. He is working with our State representatives to advocate for vaccine availability commensurate with other Oregon counties. The Superintendent is looking forward to sharing his annual “Reflections” with the Board in preparation for his upcoming evaluation, along with establishing the 2021-22 Superintendent/Board goals.

Superintendent Cordon also thanked RHS administrative staff for opening this building for the Board Meeting, and the District OPS Team and Technology Coordinator Matt Hill for making this meeting possible.

INDIVIDUAL REPORTS BY DIRECTORS

Director Brandon Bishop expressed gratitude for the educational staff for their patience and tenacity as we wrapped up one semester and began another. We look forward to facing the challenges of returning to in-person instruction. Dr. Bishop thanked the individuals responsible for bringing the vaccine clinic to fruition and is hopeful for a great turnout.

Director Rod Cotton shared how cool it was to see the long-missing yellow school buses in the neighborhoods on Monday. He expressed confidence that the Phase One Mascot sub-committee would get right to work and be prepared with a great report in February. The Board is committed to listening and making a great decision.

Director Steve Patterson noted that it’s been an inspiration to see our leaders taking on the challenges over this past year, having to deal with seemingly one thing after another. Our leaders continuing to meet those endless challenges is something our community members don’t have an opportunity to observe. Steve reflected that no one wants to be back in the buildings more than those present in this room, and he stated his appreciation for the hard work that was instrumental in making that happen.

Director Hall echoed Mr. Cordon’s appreciation for the use of this facility. She also thanked the community, teachers, assistants, etc., along with those who contacted the Board offering their opinions. This took courage and shows their interest in our schools, and she expressed hope that the interest will continue all the way to a bond levy. Micki explained that when you read about COVID-19, people believe that communication has broken down. Director Hall pointed out that we are in an actual pandemic, so of course communication has broken down. She is hopeful that people are using these tough times to get better not only at what we do, but also in how we treat others. Food for thought.

Chair Larson reflected that it's been a challenging month to be on a school board. Her colleagues have had to wrestle with a lot. Rebecca explained that her family enjoys Calvin and Hobbs, and this year it feels like playing Calvin ball with the rules continually changing and having to start over. She is grateful to everyone who has "stayed in the game". She referenced a children's book about the seven mice who individually have a different truth, none of which are wrong, but all incomplete. Becky explained that our job on this Board is to be that last mouse. The job has been weighty this month, but she reminded everyone that we are doing what's best for staff, kids, parents and our community and schools in the years to come.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chair Larson reminded attendees who wished to address the Board that Asst. Superintendent Michelle Knee would let them know once their two-minute time limitation was about to expire.

Criset Palenshus, 458 W. Umpqua Street, Roseburg, member of the Mohawk tribe, attended as a multi-cultural parent of a future student. She explained the hard work of indigenous people, whose voices may not be heard, and noted she just wants what is best for kids, and that any time now would be great. She is curious if there will be indigenous representation on the mascot subcommittee. She also shared that her expectation was to receive an antagonistic reception, and apologized to the Board if they are already at a place where she assumed they were not.

Kalli Albertus, 177 Barron Ct., Roseburg, a 2016 RHS alumnus shared that she was adamantly against changing the mascot, but changed her mind after doing research and determining that mascots are supposed to bring good luck, but are not a person or a thing. She explained that her sister, who is fair skinned, has her ethnicity questioned. Our nation's first people are leaders, individuals, college graduates, and deserving of respect. She advocated to create an untainted new legacy for RHS. Kalli thanked Superintendent Cordon, and expressed appreciation for the thoughts shared this evening.

Jose Ramirez, 456 W. Umpqua Street, Roseburg, read a communication from Beaverton resident and 2002 RHS graduate and creator of an online petition to drop the RHS mascot, Jessica Bascom, who is again advocating to remove the mascot. She reported being filled with rage after the previous board meeting, believing a white male expressing confusion on why the feather is racist has no authority over someone with Indian background, and her opinion should hold more weight. She further stated that the mascot is racist, and the time is always right for change.

Chair Larson thanked everyone for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Larson shared that the February 10th School Board Meeting would be held in person, with the location yet to be determined. With all business before the Board concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
JPC/jlk

Next Meeting: February 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Roseburg High School Rose Theatre, located at 400 W. Harvard Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon.