

ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Regular Meeting and Executive Session

Roseburg High School – The Rose Theatre

400 West Harvard Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon

Vol 2 No. 17

February 24, 2021

Board Members:

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



Exc

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, February 24, 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 and immediately followed by an Executive Session.

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board Chair Rebecca Larson confirmed that we had live streaming active and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees. Roseburg High School Principal, Jill Weber, led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE: Board and Cabinet members attended in person, with the exceptions of Director Steve Patterson and Assistant Superintendent, Michelle Knee, who were both excused. Education reporter, Sanne Godfrey and RHS Leadership student, Marin Gray, also attended in person.

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD / REVIEW OF AGENDA

Superintendent Cordon informed the Board that there were no changes to the regular agenda this evening. An additional topic of discussion was added to the Executive Session due to receipt of a patron complaint.

Chair Larson referenced the large stacks of paper before each member of the Board, explaining that these are printed copies of the community input with regard to the high school mascot. The Board is committed to investing the time to review each response, and because of that there will be no action taken. Chair Larson reminded everyone that throughout this process, adults have been given the opportunity to share their input and this should be an example of how to have respectful conversations with others, including those who may have differing opinions.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP REPORT

RHS students Amiya Fulton and Kaydence Schwender were welcomed to the School Board Meeting, with Chair Larson noting that it's been a while since students were able to join us. Current sports activities were shared, including football, soccer, cross country and volleyball. Members of many of the clubs have begun meetings, such as FBLA, NHS, ASTRA, etc. Leadership students are reaching out to students who are struggling with Zoom as well as those who are not accessing the learning opportunities available to them, letting them know that they

are missed! The students are busy trying to bring back old traditions, such as making preparations for Spirit Week. Kaydence reported that while it's hard to maintain the six-foot social distancing mandate, kids are glad to be back. She is thankful for the teachers who have made themselves available for student feedback. Amiya added that for her, the transition to hybrid learning was relatively smooth, and the administrative team and teachers have done a good job in reaching out to students on days when students are not in person. Everyone is becoming accustomed to the sanitation guidelines and wearing of masks. These requirements are becoming so routine that students don't even have to think about them anymore. She also shared her gratitude to the RHS staff for maintaining quality education during these most difficult times. Both students acknowledged their appreciation for having the opportunity to be back in school.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Consent Agenda was presented, including Approval of the Consent Agenda, Minutes from the February 10 Board Meeting, along with Gifts to the District. There were no proposed personnel actions. Director Micki Hall moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Director Rodney Cotton seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

M2-80 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 Chief Operations Officer, Cheryl Northam when the 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.

Jessica Bascom, no address provided, a 2002 RHS graduate from Beaverton and member of Klamath and Creek tribes, announced that she is the creator of the online petition to remove the mascot and now has 6826 signatures. She criticized local residents for signing letters she believes claim an identity and heritage not theirs to claim. With her allotted time expired, the speaker informed the board that they are failing their job to provide equity for all students.

Jennifer Singleton, Singleton Road, announced that she has four children attending Roseburg Schools, and her family has past experience coaching and supporting Roseburg Public Schools. Family members have lived here since 1904, are proud members of the Roseburg community and of being Roseburg Indians. Mrs. Singleton shared that her family stood in the weather collecting 729 signatures from citizens including a man claiming to be 100% Cherokee from Oklahoma who shared his pride that Roseburg honors the Indians. She also reported that Ms. Bascom posted pictures of her daughter on social media, ignoring demands to remove the post for four days. She asked the Board to listen to their community in this matter.

Kalli Albertus, Barron Court in Roseburg, a 2016 graduate who has previously addressed the Board, encouraged the Board to not listen to one voice or one that is amplified to silence other voices, outlined the mission of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) representing 500 federally recognized tribes, to have a leading voice in racial equity for all native people. She reflected that many references considered to be harmful to natives have been eliminated and encouraged the Board to be mindful of cultural ethnicity as they consider the mascot.

Wynena Bryant, NW Dogwood in Roseburg, a parent of two American Indian daughters who attended RHS, shared her belief that Indians are a culture and she finds the mascot offensive. She appreciates the Board trying to listen and get input but believes it's better to not prolong a decision.

Criset Palenshus, West Umpqua St. in Roseburg, asked the Board not to uphold white supremacist values of entitlement, taking and extracting from those who were originally here. The middle schools are named for white supremacists and the Board should resign if they won't stand up for this community. She suggested they keep the name RHS, calling it 'Racist High School'.

Mandie Pritchard, Madrone St. in Roseburg, is a member of the Pueblo and grew up in Roseburg. She offered that what is not at risk is pride, but at stake is a psychological impact on native youth. Those children are not Cow Creek. The Board has the responsibility to protect the health, safety and well-being of native children.

Angela Walker, a Beaverton, Oregon resident, stated her responsibility as a Native American mother and aunt to stand up and demand better. Research that shows physical and psychological damage should be enough to end the discussion, and non-natives are appropriating a culture that is not theirs. Her grandmother was a survivor of one of the boarding schools. Giving weight to input from the general public reinforces racial superiority and is irresponsible, and they will not stop fighting.

RESOLUTION 20-21-12: CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION WEEK

Chair Larson stated that we cannot acknowledge our classified employees enough for working so hard to keep our buildings and grounds looking their best; assuring that our offices run efficiently; provide hundreds of meals during the pandemic to support our students and families; support teachers in making the most of learning opportunities in the classrooms, maintain technology, and help to keep children safe on playgrounds. Superintendent Cordon expressed his gratitude for all staff, working together as a team without regard for classification. He explained that the reality is that our schools could not operate without the skills of those staff members who keep kids safe and supported in the classrooms.

Director Micki Hall moved to adopt Resolution 20-21-12 designating the week of March 1-5, 2021 as Classified Employee Appreciation Week. Director Charles Lee seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously. Director Hall shared that everyone working in the schools is a teacher and should be treated in accordance with how extremely important their work is. Chair Larson encouraged everyone to join us in celebrating these heroes working in our schools.

M2-81 Approved Resolution 20-21-12 designating March 1-5, 2021 as Classified Employee Appreciation Week.
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CHROME BOOK PURCHASE REQUEST

Assistant Superintendent, Michelle Knee, was excused this evening but had provided a memo to the Board outlining the proposal to purchase 1,000 Chromebooks. The additional devices would replace broken Chromebooks, those that have reached the end of their consumable life, as well as those that can no longer be updated. This purchase from CDW-G in the approximate amount of \$234,000 would be funded utilizing ESSER funds and would assure that enough devices would be available at the elementary schools assuring that all students have access to a device.

Director Micki Hall moved to approve the purchase of 1,000 Chromebooks in the proposed amount of \$234,000 from CDW-G. Director Howard Johnson seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously. Technology staff will research Director Johnson's inquiry pertaining to product warranty.

M2-82 Approved the purchase of 1,000 Chromebooks from CDW-G in the approximate amount of \$234,000
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RECOMMENDATION FOR RENEWAL OF ANNUAL CONTRACTS

Human Resources Director, Robert Freeman, presented the personnel actions memo explaining probationary administrator renewals, contract administrator extensions, probationary teacher renewals, two-year teacher contract extensions, and contracts ending as outlined below:

- **PROBATIONARY ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACTS**
 - First to Second Year
 - Second to Third Year
 - Third Year to Contract

- **SECOND YEAR CONTRACT ADMINISTRATORS TO THREE YEAR EXTENSIONS**
 - July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024

- **PROBATIONARY TEACHER CONTRACTS**
 - First Year to Second Year
 - Second Year to Third Year
 - Third Year to Contract
 - Probationary First Year to Contract

- **EXTEND CONTRACT TEACHER CONTRACTS**
 - Two-Year Extensions – 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 School Years

- **CONTRACT EXPIRATIONS**
 - RETIREMENTS / RESIGNATIONS at the end of the 2020-21 School Year
 - RESIGNATION FOLLOWING LEAVE OF ABSENCE
 - EXPIRATION OF TEMPORARY CONTRACTS

Director Micki Hall suggested approving all proposed contract recommendations as a single action item and moved to approve Action Items 3-8. Director Brandon Bishop seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

M2-83 Approved the Renewal of annual contracts and expiration of contracts as proposed by Human Resources

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – MASCOT PHASE ONE (February 23, 2021)

Subcommittee Chair, Micki Hall, thanked her fellow committee members, Rod Cotton and Howard Johnson, for being concerned with doing the right thing. The group met yesterday to review comments taken by the Board through February 22. Director Hall explained that the committee's intention is to listen to constituents, because we serve them, but reminded everyone that this is only one part of the process. She emphasized that 42% of this Board is brand new to this issue and were not present when this issue was taken up previously. In all, over 2,100 responses were received in answer to the invitation to provide input with regard to the high school mascot. The committee intends to take the time necessary to facilitate further thoughtful and respectful conversation around this matter with the objective of finding a path forward that best serves all students, keeping in mind our District Strategic Plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent expressed his appreciation of living in a community where patrons care deeply and understand the importance of public schools. Patrons are provided a voice and have been stopping by the office this week, many of whom have lived here since before he was born. He was able to get out to the schools and work alongside our teachers, who have been so flexible this year in doing things they have never done before, not only supporting student in their academics, but also with their social/emotional needs. We are all grateful to have kids back in school, and hope that they will look back on the struggles this year and understand that it has helped them to think and work independently. He pointed out the leadership members present tonight and expressed how grateful we are for their resilience as we figured out a way to do school a different way. He also emphasized his appreciation for this School Board, noting that not everyone understands the care and love they have for our schools and students. It has been frustrating to have the Board called out for not caring by those who don't recognize the passion and planning that happens behind the scenes. Jared gave assurance that this Board spends the time to think about all students and has adopted a Strategic Plan that is about all students, and he is grateful to them for doing so.

This afternoon, the state economist released the economic forecast for next year and the current service level proposed by the state is less than the governor's proposal. Jared will continue to advocate with our representatives that school funding increase from the proposed \$8.9 B to \$9.6 B for Oregon schools.

INDIVIDUAL REPORTS BY DIRECTORS

Director Howard Johnson was saddened to announce that his sister is currently hospitalized in critical condition, resulting in a lot of family stress.

Director Micki Hall read a prepared statement, explaining her emotion tonight after losing her dog after 17 years, and feeling the anxiety resulting from the ongoing pandemic. She expressed thanks to the community members who took the time to share their opinions, and encouraged everyone to keep in mind that neither a survey or any vote will settle the mascot issue. The Board finds itself in the position of, "damned if you do, damned if you don't." Director Hall emphasized that the issue is about aligning curriculum, practices and values with the District-wide Strategic Plan; compatibility with the All Students Belong policy envisioned by the Board; changing to meet a world in which all students are respectfully and equitably taught; finding a way to meet the needs of all communities within our district; and listening, learning and reflecting on all decisions we make in our classrooms, buildings and Boardrooms. While we thank all of those who have participated passionately about this issue, we remind them the work of a school board is never complete and will continue to change as we meet the future with our children.

Chair Larson echoed the comments from Superintendent Cordon, crediting the staff whose job descriptions changed so many times over the past year. She shared the gratitude she feels every day for them, acknowledging how hard a push it has been this year. Mrs. Larson shared a poster announcing the "theatre on demand" *Wizard of Oz* performance by the RHS drama department. Chair Larson thanked public health, AVIVA and Douglas ESD for scheduling a vaccination clinic at the Douglas County Fairgrounds and ended by expressing her ongoing gratitude for our students and families.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Chair Larson reminded attendees who wished to address the Board that Chief Operations Officer, Cheryl Northam, would let them know once their two-minute time limitation was about to expire.

Gerald Hash of Roseburg, and a 1954 RHS graduate, acknowledged that the Board for spending a lot of time

on the mascot issue, and encouraged them to listen to the earlier message from Mrs. Singleton. He asserted that getting rid of the current mascot would do a lot of harm. He also addressed the attendees advocating to remove the mascot, informing them that he had spent 21 years defending this country so that they would have the right to say the things they had to say tonight.

Hilary Jones of Portland and 2002 RHS graduate, advocated to change the mascot, sharing that even though she no longer lives here, she has family and friends who remain here. She expressed that according to studies, it is important to consider that this is the right thing to do.

Lacy Bartholomew Welborn, of Portland and 2002 graduate of RHS, shared that her experience at RHS shaped who she is today. She played basketball at UCC as a Timber woman, and when that mascot changed it did not change her experience. She shared that she wants to be proud of Roseburg and the State of Oregon is watching. She encouraged the Board to do the right thing and retire the mascot.

RECESS: Chair Larson thanked the audience for attending tonight, and the individuals who shared their experiences and comments. She informed those remaining that the Board would now retire to convene into Executive Session at 7:05 p.m.

**Executive Session
Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) and (b)**

Chair Larson convened an Executive Session at 7:10 to hear a complaint submitted by a patron. The Board discussed the complaint which had been referred to the District's legal counsel. The Board determined to take formal action during regular session immediately following the Executive Session as to their decision. The Board requested that the Superintendent's office respond to the complainant as to the decision of the Board.

The Board also conducted an evaluation of the Superintendent and will work with Communications Analyst, Chelsea Duncan, in creating a press release for our local patrons.

The Executive Session was recessed at 8:15 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened

Chair Larson reconvened the Regular Session at 8:17 p.m.

Director Brandon Bishop moved to accept the recommendation of District Legal Counsel to not pursue any further investigation of the patron complaint reviewed during Executive Session. Director Rodney Cotton seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

M2-84 Accepted recommendation of legal counsel not to pursue further investigation of patron complaint
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ADJOURNMENT: With all business concluded, Chair Larson adjourned the meetings at 8:23 p.m.

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent
JPC/jlk

Next Meeting: March 17, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in The Rose Theatre located at Roseburg High School, 400 W. Harvard Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon.