

# ROSEBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**School Board Work Session**  
**Electronic Link Available**  
**Administrative Office Board Room**  
**1419 NW Valley View Drive**  
**Roseburg, Oregon 97471**

Vol 3 No. 18

May 25, 2022

**Board Members:**

Dr. Brandon Bishop   
Rodney Cotton   
Rev. Howard Johnson, Vice Chair   
Ann Krimetz   
Rebecca Larson, Chair   
Charles F. Lee   
Andrew Shirtcliff

**Administration:**

Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent   
Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources   
Michelle Knee, Assistant Superintendent   
Cheryl Northam, Director of Finance and Operations   
Melissa Roberts, Director of Student Services

## BOARD WORK SESSION

**TIME/PLACE:** A Board Work Session of the Douglas County School District No. 4 Board of Directors was convened at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, in the administrative office Board Room located at 1419 NW Valley View Drive in Roseburg, Oregon, in person with an electronic link available.

**CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Board Chair Rebecca Larson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and invited Superintendent Cordon to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ATTENDANCE:** Board members were in attendance, along with Superintendent Cordon and Cabinet members, and RHS leadership student, Marin Gray was also present. Director of Finance and Operations, Cheryl Northam, was available via electronic link, but joined the group in person to answer funding questions later in the meeting.

### COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD / REVIEW OF AGENDA

Superintendent Cordon welcomed everyone here in person, including RPS Safety Coordinator, Ed Villarreal. Jared explained that the school shooting yesterday in Texas created a range of emotions for many of us, considering the 27 school shootings that have occurred in the country just this year. It's particularly poignant in light of the failure of our bond, as the focus of that effort was safety and security. Tonight we will talk about our priorities and potential next steps. But first he asked for a moment of silence to acknowledge the recent tragedies experienced most recently in Uvalde, Texas and Buffalo, New York. Jared invited Board members to comment on the events of this week.

Director Charles Lee confirmed that his observation over many elections is that it's often a mystery of why things happen the way they do, but he expressed that the bond was competently constructed and put forward to the voters.

Director Rod Cotton stated that yesterday's tragedy was terrible, and he is concerned for kids who have been impacted by COVID over the past few years while we are experiencing a huge shortage of mental health personnel. His daughter, a teacher, shared with him her concern over kids in her classroom and their families

and the pressure she feels to protect them. Our teachers have become first responders in the classroom. Mr. Cotton expressed frustration that our nation can send billions of dollars to Ukraine, but we can't spend money on education. Those children in Texas lay wounded and needed their parents. The security officer tried to stop the shooter who entered through an unlocked door. This should not be happening. Declaring that his heart is broken, Director Cotton believes we cannot wait for a bond to pass and need to figure this out.

Chair Rebecca Larson shared that the bond failing is hard because our motivation behind it was truly the safety and security of kids. She is worried what could happen in the event an earthquake occurs when students are in the Old Main. Her own children are there every day. She noted that the two adults in the classroom with the children in Texas both lost their lives. She went on to thank our teachers, who do active drills, along with the great administrative team, safety teams, secretaries, and support staff, all of whom she is confident would put their lives on the line on behalf of students. They carry an emotional weight and it's important they know they have our support. In addition to teaching, they worry about how to keep kids safe; our thoughts are with all of them and we are grateful.

Director Ann Krimetz confirmed this is a wake up call for all of us, and it's time to make some shifts in priorities. Knowing kids are our most valued treasure, parents have been affected and it's opened their eyes even more. When she was working in the schools, she observed first-hand the needs in the schools, and we have to do our part to seal up some of the holes. We may not have the funding we desire, but we will do what we can to work on safety, which is becoming a much higher priority than it perhaps was.

Superintendent Cordon thanked the Board for their reflections and shared that he had sent a message to staff and parents earlier today. He continues to believe every child and adult deserves to come to school in a safe environment, and our responsibility is to get them back home in at least as good condition as they came to us. We have work to do in this area.

Board members offered their personal insights, including:

- Director Rod Cotton emphasized the importance of security personnel on campuses.
- Director Andrew Shirtcliff recalled that the largest amount polled the highest, but he wonders if that was an accurate representation of how our community felt. Given that the 2020 bond results were much closer, he believes that a proposed amount closer to that requested in 2020 could have resulted in better results.
- Director Cotton offered that he would not apologize for the amount asked in the 2022 bond, but agreed that Director Shirtcliff may be right, although he believes that no amount would have passed due to the economy. However, he stated he continues to believe in this community. He reported hearing comments from individuals not supporting public education due to misperceptions regarding CRT, gender identification, parent choice, etc. He explained that in Oregon, districts must either borrow money or run a school bond in order to take care of their buildings. In 2020, we were hampered by COVID-19; in 2022 it was the economy. He understands the sentiment that things are not good right now, but doesn't appreciate the sly, slanderous comments from some individuals, even a board member from another district. We will see what impact this negativity has on our community.
- Dr. Brandon Bishop conveyed that he shared his feelings in the Public Forum and continues to be saddened by the outcome of the bond. In light of events in Texas, the economy, etc., we still have to do some things. Unfortunately, there is much misinformation about how Oregon's public schools receive funding. Eighty-five percent of State School Funds cover staffing expense. Monies for buildings may require other items to be cut from the budget, and those are hard decisions. Issues at the Old Main building are pretty glaring. The tragedy in Texas could happen here; we are not immune. The

majority of voters didn't support the bond, but that doesn't mean we should not have plan b. That is our reality right now.

- Director Ann Krimetz asked the superintendent if the PAC remains supportive of our bond effort, and Mr. Cordon responded that these individuals have been amazing. He believes they have the capacity to help us get this passed. Representatives will be joining us at the next Board meeting to debrief. They remain committed to the concept that this is really about a better community. We are impressed with the wide level of support from all sectors of the business community. We need this for helping to develop our work force (vocational-technical) and academic acceleration. That group is resilient and will stand by this board.
- Chair Rebecca Larson summarized that you can't vote away the need. Maybe Andrew is right and we need to prioritize. That might mean another smaller bond with vital things. These needs are very real and still exist. Financing education is really complicated. Grant dollars come with restrictions, and it's hard for a community to understand that. The only way to do this without cutting teachers and programs is to get a bond passed. We do have to move forward and keep at it. While she would love to see educational improvements, we have to do something to keep kids safe. Doing nothing is not an option.

### **WORK SESSION DISCUSSION** **Bond Debrief – Next Steps**

Superintendent Cordon and the Board of Education reviewed the history behind the bond efforts of 2020 and 2022.

The Board was reminded of the current measures in place within the district, including

- ✓ District Safety Coordinator hired in 2020;
- ✓ Developed a District Mental Health Team;
- ✓ Assembled and distributed 326 emergency buckets for every classroom;
- ✓ Added more security cameras;
- ✓ Fortified perimeter fencing at middle schools;
- ✓ Developed an emergency Operations Team to focus on guidance and protocols;
- ✓ Every site currently conducts monthly fire, earthquake, secure and lockdown drills;
- ✓ Investigate ongoing crimes in the district to ensure student suspects undergo restorative justice process; observe and track crime data at our schools.

Additional measures currently in process also include:

- \* More elementary school fencing where needed this summer;
  - \* Hiring a District Security Officer;
  - \* Developing emergency communication and reunification guidance; and
  - \* Upgrading intercom systems where needed at our elementary schools.

Steps taken to address additional needs:

- ✓ The district underwent a facilities assessment and long-range planning process from 2017-2019.
- ✓ Following this process, the Board identified key projects to address in 2019-2020. All of them had a foundation of safety, security, renovation and repair.
- ✓ The district placed a bond measure on the May 2020 ballot. The bond was narrowly defeated.
- ✓ Back to the drawing board: The district implemented a community-driven, citizen led bond development process in 2021-2022. We sought insight from the community through polling.

- ✓ In response to community support and polling, the district sought a new bond in the May 2022 election.

#### Bond Campaign review –

- Election results: 15,038 total votes
  - 6,543 – Yes votes (43.51%)
  - 8,495 – No votes (56.49%)
- We led a strong campaign, alongside the PAC.
- There was widespread support from local business and industry, and the health care community.
- We faced challenges due to the economy and distrust of public schools based on misinformation.
- Our health, safety and security needs remain and cannot be ignored.

Our nation has experienced tragedies as recent as yesterday, where in Texas a young man took the lives of both teachers and students in a senseless act of violence.

With our safety and security needs remaining unmet after the failure of the May 2022 bond, the Board members participated in a group activity to identify our most pressing needs when it comes to the safety and security of our students and staff. Chair Larson summarized that “You can’t vote away the needs.”

The Board considered the areas of concern identified by the community surveys and the Community Bond Development Committee which recommended that a capital improvement bond focus on district-wide facility updates that included health and safety projects, renovation and repairs, accessibility and educational improvements.

The Board members began the group activity by individually prioritized categories and projects identified in the 2022 bond, including:

- Educational and facility improvements at all elementary and middle schools;
- Career and Technical education/vocational ed investments;
- Replacement of Old Main at RHS that maintains and honors the historical architectural elements;
- New multi-purpose facilities at 5 elementary schools;
- District-wide improvements such as HVAC, roofing, plumbing and electrical;
- Security entrances throughout the district to ensure access control, and new generators at 11 schools;
- Elementary school playground improvements;
- Replacements for outdoor athletic, PE, and community spaces including school tracks and new synthetic turf fields at middle schools; and
- Drop-off improvements at elementary schools

The Board was encouraged to utilize the Eisenhower Matrix to delineate what’s urgent and what’s important. From the priority items identified in the 2022 bond, the Board was able to identify three that they believe cannot wait until another bond measure can be put before the voters:

1. Security entrances throughout the district to ensure access control, and new generators at 11 schools.
2. Replacement of Old Main at RHS that maintains and honors the historical architectural elements.
3. District-wide improvements including HVAC, roofing, plumbing and electrical.

Chair Larson explained that the failure of the 2022 bond was particularly difficult as the motivation behind it truly was the safety and security of our kids. This Board cares deeply about secure campuses and safe buildings. She confirmed that the priorities are reflective of those identified by the Community Bond

Committee that both she and Director Shirtcliff participated on. She continued that none of the items considered tonight are not important. Some people don't understand that a new 6A high school such as in Bend, cost \$300 million. An elementary school can cost \$40-50 million. But that only solves problems at one building. This exercise reflects needs vs. wants, some that really need to happen and others that would be very nice to happen. That's what we are seeing now. Director Cotton noted that he really liked this process.

Director Shirtcliff added that everything in the recent bond was a need, not a want. The committee cut millions of dollars' worth of projects from the list. Chair Larson concurred that the top three are desperate needs, and Director Shirtcliff pointed out that now we figure out how to do it.

The Board heard several ideas on how to fund major projects, including fundraising, advertising, etc. Superintendent Cordon explained that we have some monies in ESSER, or the district could consider borrowing, combinations of borrowing and cutting programs, and capital bond campaigns. We will look at all options.

Superintendent Cordon and Director of Finance and Operations, Cheryl Northam, will begin investigating all available avenues to address the three priorities identified by the Board, and bring options for consideration to the June 8 Board Meeting. Mr. Cordon thanked the Board for their involvement tonight; it's been very helpful to narrow the focus. He pledged to come up with a plan to meet the needs of the kids and the community.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With discussion concluded, Chair Larson adjourned the work session at 7:20 p.m.

**Jared P. Cordon, Superintendent**  
JPC/jlk

**Next Meeting:** June 8, 2022, 6:00 p.m. at Sunnyslope Elementary, located at 2230 Cannon Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon, and also accessible via Zoom