

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT #502  
ST. HELENS, OREGON**

The Budget Committee of St. Helens School District #502, Columbia County, Oregon convened in the Administrative Office of the District, County and State on January 21, 2009.

**Present Were:**

Benita Saatvedt, Budget Committee Chair  
Nathan Helwig, Budget Committee Vice-Chair  
Jana Mann, Budget Committee Member  
Rebecca Wallace, Budget Committee Member  
Dennis Minsent, Budget Committee Member  
Carol Ford, Budget Committee Member  
Alan King, Budget Committee Member  
Bill Crist, Budget Committee Member  
Patricia Adams, Superintendent  
Terri Burns, Director of Operations & Finance  
Amanda Stuber, Executive Assistant

Superintendent Adams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the flag salute.

**ELECTION OF 2009-10 BUDGET COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

**Budget Committee Chair**

The budget committee introduced themselves and prior to Superintendent Adams' request for Budget Committee Chair nominations the committee was asked to carefully consider their nomination. With the forecasted budget shortfall the committee was encouraged to nominate a chair who knows the district and community members well, knows the direction the district is taking, the facility needs, the technology advancements, the staff, and who is engaged with the community through community involvement.

Rebecca Wallace entered a motion to nominate Benita Saatvedt as Budget Committee Chair. Bill Crist seconded the motion.

Jana Mann entered a motion to nominate Rebecca Wallace as Budget Committee Chair. With no second to the motion, the nomination failed.

The motion to nominate Benita Saatvedt carried unanimously.

Benita introduced herself to the budget committee and provided her educational and professional background.

**Budget Committee Vice Chair**

Bill Crist entered a motion to nominate Denise Minsent as Budget Committee Vice-Chair. Rebecca Wallace seconded.

Alan King entered a motion to nominate Nathan Helwig as Budget Committee Vice-Chair. Denise Minsent seconded the motion.

Benita Saatvedt entered a motion to nominate Rebecca Wallace as Budget Committee Vice-Chair. With no second to the motion, the nomination failed.

Denise Minsent withdrew his nomination to serve as Vice Chair.

The motion nominating Nathan Helwig as Budget Committee Vice-Chair unanimously carried.

#### **REVIEW YEAR TO DATE 2008-2009 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Superintendent Adams reviewed the recent statewide budget shortfall to education which translates to a \$400,000 shortfall to the SHSD's 2008-2009 school year budget. To absorb the shortfall it was explained that a recommendation to use \$150,000 of capital reserve funds, the insurance premium savings of \$200,000, and \$50,000 of tightening up throughout the district has been approved by the board. School districts have been warned that there will be additional cuts to education at the governor's level which could result in additional cuts. If this does occur, the additional shortfall would have to be absorbed through a reduction in staff or reduction in instructional and staff work days. It was noted that the elimination of one school/work day is a savings to the district of \$95,000 per day.

The committee briefly discussed other cost saving avenues such as four day weeks, reduced number of school days, and the consolidation of programs.

Mrs. Burns provided a summary of the 2008-2009 projections. The projections reflect a 2008-2009 ending fund balance of \$1.5 million with a \$600,000 contingency. Columbia County taxes were reviewed and are on target this budget cycle. Due to the closure of Boise it is estimated there will be a 12% reduction in county taxes. The year to date enrollment is down approximately 50 students and there is an anticipated decline of an additional 50 students due to the relocation of Boise families. The 2009-10 health insurance increases are unsure of and the 2009-10 rate estimates are not expected until March. Discussion also occurred on PERS benefits and an expected increase.

The next official state budget forecast is February 20 and again in late May. Superintendent Adams noted she plans to develop a conservative plan and an alternate plan to address any late 2009-10 budget projections that will require additional reductions.

#### **2009-10 BUDGET ESTIMATES & IMPACTING ISSUES TO 2009-10 BUDGET**

Superintendent Adams reviewed the provided spreadsheet that reflects data for the 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 school years. The data in the spreadsheet contained student enrollment, school funding and budget deficit information, the 2009-10 school fund allocation needed to maintain current programs, the projected 2009-10 deficit to the district, and mid year budget cut information. The currently projected 2009-10 school district reduction is \$1, 340,030 and to give a vision of what the projected deficit is equivalent to, it was explained the \$1.3 million reduction is compared to cutting 14 school days from the school year or 21 teachers from the district.

Superintendent Adams noted she does not expect the budget committee to have the knowledge of federal funds or ESD service credits. She will be working on using the federal funds to the maximum allowed by law. It was noted that there will need to be some very creative budgeting during the 2009-10 budget process. Each building has been recruited for advice and each building is working with their staff on where or how they can reduce from their building budget.

Superintendent Adams also explained she has a close working relationship with the Columbia County Superintendent group and will explore any areas of partnering with neighboring districts. Each district could benefit from each others resources.

Mrs. Saatvedt requested the budget committee look for possibilities on where to save and was asked to forward those recommendations on for consideration.

Mrs. Burns reviewed what projects she has going for savings throughout the district.

Mrs. Ford questioned the possibility of re-opening the bargaining agreements for salary freezes to save positions.

Superintendent Adams has heard discussion between the principals and district office staff of doing such to save positions in their area but has not heard of such among the association leaders. The 2009-10 salary estimates from the business department on all staff classifications has been requested and will those costs will be reviewed with the appropriate people.

#### **DISCUSSION OF 2009-10 BUDGET CALENDAR AND BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Superintendent Adams explained that during the months of February and March she will work closely with principals, program directors, etc. to develop K-12 budget priorities. Superintendent Adams noted she is not looking at cutting programs, not unless the board gives her direction to do so, but has had conversation with administrative staff on reductions to all areas of the budget, including district office and administrative staff.

The budget committee questioned their role in the process and discussion occurred on a work session for the budget committee. Superintendent Adams explained a representative from OSBA, Betsy Miller-Jones, is available to lead a workshop which could assist the budget committee with their role should the committee find it beneficial. Areas of focus could include the budget process, roles and involvement of the budget committee, budgeting laws, and what is working for other school district.

The budget committee was in agreement that the budget committee members and board could both benefit from the workshop.

Superintendent Adams will work with Mrs. Miller-Jones on her availability during the second week of March for a half day late afternoon work session. Dates will be compiled and forwarded to the committee for review.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Budget Committee Chair

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Budget Committee Secretary