

OUUSD Annual Meeting Minutes

Oxbow High School Auditorium

April 30, 2025

The Annual Meeting of OUUSD was called to order at 6:30 PM by Arvid Johnson, Moderator. Prior to the meeting, an informational session was held. Each building Principal shared information about the programs and goals at their schools, and questions were answered as time allowed.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for a term of one (1) year.

- a. Nomination by Walter Cottrell, seconded by Bob Wing for Arvid Johnson to serve as Moderator. A. Johnson was elected unanimously by voice vote to serve as Moderator.

ARTICLE 2: To elect a Clerk for a term of one (1) year.

- a. Nomination by Danielle Corti, seconded by Walter Cottrell for Maegan Ballou to serve as Clerk. M. Ballou was elected unanimously by voice vote to serve as Clerk.

ARTICLE 3: To elect a Treasurer for a term of one (1) year.

- a. Nomination by Marsha Tomlinson, seconded by Danielle Corti for Lyn Fischer to serve as Treasurer. L. Fischer was elected unanimously by voice vote to serve as Treasurer.

ARTICLE 4: To hear and act upon the reports of said District for the past year.

- a. Motion by Sarah Copeland Hanzas, seconded by Julie Bingell to accept the reports.
- b. Bud Haas noted that he was looking for reports of two funds in the report—the Capital Improvement Fund and the Education Stabilization Reserve Fund—and asked that they be included in the report in the future.
- c. Motion voted on, and the reports were unanimously approved by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5: To elect two school directors of said District (one (1) to represent the Town of Bradford for a three-year term to expire 2028 and one (1) to represent the Town of Newbury for a three-year term to expire 2028).

- a. Nomination by Carol Cottrell for Leanne Hatch to serve as a Board member from Bradford for a three-year term. There being no other nominations, Leanne Hatch was elected unanimously by voice vote.
- b. Nomination by Carol Cottrell for Danielle Corti to serve as a Board member from Newbury for a three-year term. There being no other nominations, Danielle Corti was elected unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters of Oxbow Unified Union School District approve the school board to expend twenty-one million, four hundred fifty-four thousand, six hundred eleven dollars (\$21,454,611.00), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? The Oxbow Unified Union School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil spending of \$13,151.64, which is 1.83% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

- a. Motion by Sarah Copeland Hanzas, seconded by Walter Cottrell to approve the article
- b. Motion by Jill Baron from Bradford and seconded to increase the budget by \$100,000.00. Bob Wing questioned if the budget can be increased from the floor. Moderator A. Johnson replied that, as far as he knows, it can be. J. Baron explained that she feels we are going too far by presenting a lean budget. She is concerned about the food service and the importance of nutritious food for students. Bradford Elementary is considering outsourcing to Abbey Group. She asked that the School Board take a more holistic approach, considering the quality and quantity of food. Don't compromise what we feed our children. She asked that the budget increase be used to reinstate the

- food service worker in Bradford, who was cut, and to maintain the current staffing level through the spring of 2026.
- c. Julie Bingell asked how much of the proposed increase would be going to food and how much to other expenses? Board member Tim Ross responded that the position that was cut was approximately \$56,000, including benefits. The remaining amount of about \$44,000 would be going into food. We will hear the plan over the summer by the committee that is studying the food service programs. The food service at BES is projected to lose money this year, even with the reduction in staff.
 - d. Sarah McKelvey, parent of a BES student, praised the work of Chef Billy Brigsten for the quality of the meals and for going into classrooms, showing students how to prepare foods.
 - e. Tim Ross noted that the RIF doesn't cut the food service director's role.
 - f. Danielle Corti reminded those present that we need to be careful, since this is an open meeting, and we are talking about personnel. Grant money is no longer available, and the money wasn't there to fund the position that was cut.
 - g. Bud Haas asked if there is information on what each food service is costing our schools? Tim Ross explained that the two schools served by the Abbey Group (Oxbow and Newbury Elementary) break even. BES generally loses about \$100,000 a year. Until this year, this loss was covered by a surplus from COVID. Now, any loss has to be covered by the general fund. B. Haas asked how much is spent in each of the schools for the food service? T. Ross replied that all the food services sit outside the general fund. The only thing we are voting on is the \$60,000 loss incurred by BES.
 - h. Karen Gravlin, Bradford resident, took issue with a statement that a school is losing money when we're investing in our kids. Billy Brigsten, chef at BES, responded to a recent article in the *Valley News*. He encouraged voters to prioritize the kids' meals.

- i. Marvin Harrison, member of the budget committee, asked if federal money is still available for students' meals this year? Next year? D. Corti answered that more than likely, we will lose some of our funding, for instance for fresh fruits and vegetables. The Board is trying to look at programs and look at the matter as a district-wide discussion, and even an SU decision. She asked community members to be patient and let the Board work through it.
- j. It was moved and seconded to call the question, and the motion was approved by voice vote.
- k. A voice vote on the amendment to add \$100,000 to the budget resulted in a division of the house. A raising of hands then resulted in 63 voting in favor of the amendment, with 15 opposed, and the amendment passed.
- l. Derrick Williams, Newbury resident, proposed an amendment that the additional money be used to increase the educational staff at Oxbow. Board member D. Corti reminded those present that the Board appreciates the clear guidance they are being given, but there is no guarantee that the \$100,000 increase will be spent as requested.
- m. The motion was made, seconded, and carried by voice vote to move the question and vote on the Article as amended. By voice vote, the voters present voted to approve a budget of \$21,554,611.00

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters of Oxbow Unified Union School District authorize the use of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) of the FY 24 surplus be applied to the Capital Improvement Fund?

- a. Motion made by Walter Cottrell, seconded by Paul Jewett to authorize this.
- b. Bud Haas asked how much is in the Capital Improvement fund right now? Danielle Corti responded that there is \$575,000.00 in the fund currently. If the \$300,000.00 is added, that would bring the total to \$875,000.00. Bud Haas then asked if the \$300,000.00 could have been used to reduce taxes? D. Corti responded "yes".

- c. Motion voted on and carried by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters of Oxbow Unified Union School District authorize two hundred fifty-one thousand, fifty-three dollars (\$251,053.00) of the FY 24 surplus to be applied to the Education Stabilization Reserve Fund?

- a. Motion by Marvin Harrison, seconded by Elizabeth Friend to authorize this amount.
- b. Bud Haas asked how much is in the Education Stabilization Reserve Fund? How much was in there last year? D. Corti explained that last year's balance was \$51,000.00. We only spend it if there is an unexpected expense that is not capital improvement. This fund was started three years ago. We have not tapped into it yet.
- c. A community member noted that, with uncertainty in our future, it would be good to have this Education Stabilization Reserve Fund.
- d. Article 8 was approved unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters authorize the School Board to borrow money in anticipation of tax receipts for the 2025-2026 school year?

- a. Motion by Derrick Williams, seconded by Elizabeth Friend to authorize this, and the article was approved unanimously by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

- a. Motion by Paul Hunt, seconded by Elizabeth Friend that the Board request the Treasurer to fully report, in future years, all funds that are owned or managed by the OUUSD
- b. Danae Woods would like to see the food service budget included. D. Corti noted that all budget reports are available on line. If you call the SU Office, they will print them out and get them to you. Paul Hunt added that the motion would include the food service fund, since it is owned or managed by the district.
- c. The motion was voted on and approved unanimously by voice vote.

- d. Tom Kidder thanked the Board, adding that it's a big job to put this budget together, and they do a great job.
- e. Susan Goodell asked if information can be posted to the list serve to publicize any school events that the public could attend? D. Corti explained that school administrators are currently working with the *Journal Opinion* to get the word out.
 - a. Lisa Williams suggested that Infinite Campus would be a good way to communicate this. Is this a resource we could utilize better? There is a gap in communication, even to parents.
- f. Kerry Pendak spoke of a recent discussion at Select Board meetings. Citizens were encouraged to come to Select Board meetings to make better use of the Town website to communicate events.
- g. Dan Burwinkel encouraged better communication of events so parents and community members don't have to call the school.

On a motion Bob Wing, seconded by Marvin Harrison, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

The minutes are in draft format and are unofficial until formally approved at a future date.