Yelm Community Schools, District No. 2

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MINUTES

of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, August 27, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Bill Hauss, Denise Hendrickson, Ryan Jewell, Frank King, Casey Shaw

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT
Veronica Birdsong, Mark Bowden, DeeDee Buckingham, Kaiya Burgess, Lisa Cadero-Smith, Charles Cook, Becky Fowler, Jodi Jarmin, Teri Melone, Bryant Mettler, Brandon Pontius, Shannon Powell, Traci Schultz, Chris Woods

BUDGET HEARING

CALLED TO ORDER
President Casey Shaw called the Budget Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

BUDGET HEARING
Director of Finance Veronica Birdsong presented the proposed budget for the 2026-27 school year. Superintendent Chris Woods stated that those who signed up for comment would be heard during the regular meeting, as their comments did not pertain to the budget hearing.

ADJOURNMENT
President Casey Shaw adjourned the Budget Hearing at 6:26 p.m.

CALLED TO ORDER
President Casey Shaw called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 6:26 p.m.

AUDIENCE
Superintendent's Comments

Superintendent Chris Woods provided an overview of staffing reductions and levy planning. He reported that the District has reduced 163 positions over the past three years, saving approximately $13.5 million. Reductions have affected all employee groups and have included reductions in force, attrition, and the elimination of vacant positions. Specifically, 81 positions were reduced following the 2023–24 school year, 18 positions through attrition following 2024–25, and approximately 64 positions for the current reduction period.

Woods explained that staffing decisions are focused on aligning expenditures with available resources while maintaining required and essential student services. He noted that staffing reductions have affected certificated, classified, administrative, and non-represented employees across instructional programs, special education, transportation, facilities, food service, security, technology, and other areas. He also discussed the impact of the levy loss, changes in federal funding, and the District's current binding conditions.

Woods stated that the District will continue to review vacancies before filling positions, align staffing with available funding, limit overtime and extra-time expenses, and reduce non-personnel costs wherever possible. He noted that many operating expenses are fixed but that the District continues to explore additional savings, including reducing the use of portions of facilities, energy-efficiency projects, grants, lighting improvements, and solar energy opportunities. The District's

goal remains to protect the quality of teaching and learning while restoring long-term financial stability.

Woods also discussed overtime restrictions for classified employees who perform additional duties, including coaching and event supervision, and explained how those requirements affect staffing decisions and costs.

Regarding levy planning, Woods shared that the District is scheduling additional community listening sessions, presentations with PTA and Booster Club leadership, and levy presentations at each school. He emphasized the importance of continuing to provide the Board and community with information about the District's financial position, reductions already made, and the potential for additional reductions if the levy is unsuccessful.

Community Comments
Will Gunstrom presented comments.

NEW BUSINESS
INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS – APPROVED

New Hires		
Name	**Position**	**Effective Date**
Brandon Borcher	YHS Teacher CTE	9/9/2026
Samantha Fisher	Transportation Bus Driver	9/9/2026
Gavin Foley	Facilities Custodian	8/17/2026
Vincent Naylor	YHS Coach Assistant Football	9/1/2026
Chandelle Roberts	Transportation Bus Driver	9/9/2026
Angeline Simpson	Transportation Bus Driver	9/9/2026
LEAVE OF ABSENCE		
Name	**Position**	**Effective Date**
No Report		
RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS/TERMINATIONS		
Name	**Position**	**Effective Date**
Lorraine Brownfield	Transportation Bus Driver	8/17/2026 Retirement
Richard Houghton	YHS Coach Head Boys Track	8/13/2026 Resignation
Neona Jones	PR Paraeducator SPED	8/31/2026 Resignation
Madita Mandera	Transportation Bus Driver	8/12/2026 Resignation
Julien Oliver	OSL SIS Coordinator	8/21/2026 Resignation
Hichem Ouchefoune	Transportation Bus Driver	8/15/2026 Resignation
Melissa Stetson	PR Paraeducator SPED	8/15/2026 Resignation
STAFFING CHANGES:		
No Report		
REQUESTS FOR WAIVERS FOR TEACHING OUT OF ENDORSEMENT		
Keisha Bere-Ruiz	RMS Limited Certification	9/9/2026
Karen Blank	MP Limited Certification	9/9/2026
Rianna Delorie	PR SPED	9/9/2026
Jane Oberhansley	MK Limited Certification	9/9/2026
Laura Pride	SW SPED	9/9/2026
Caitlin Repp	FS Limited Certification	9/9/2026

M/Bill Hauss; S/Denise Hendrickson; Motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS – APPROVED
YHS Connects, 10 new game footballs $1,300.30

YHS Connects, 11th Grade Advisor $2,250.00
The Geo Group, YHS Girls Basketball $500.00
M/Frank King; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 10-25-26 - APPROVED
Transportation Vehicle Fund Budget Extension for 2025-26
M/Denise Hendrickson; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 11-25-26 – APPROVED
Adoption of the 2026-27 Budget
M/Denise Hendrickson; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

VOUCHERS AND PAYROLL - APPROVED

A. General Fund	# 70154554 – 70154628	$853,117.51
B. ASB Fund	# 70410156 - 70410158	$3,164.80
C. Capital Projects Fund	# 70501880 - 70501879	$37,069.56
D. ACH	#9000000183 – 9000000248	$4,234.40
E. Comp Tax	# 112300032 – 20230002	$291.10
F. July Payroll		$6,381,820.22

M/Denise Hendrickson; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

OPERATIONS UPDATE
Director of Operations Teri Melone provided an Operations Update highlighting work completed over the summer and preparations for the 2026–27 school year. She reviewed safety and grounds work, summer maintenance and cleaning projects, and facility concerns involving district portables. Maintenance work included returning 56 faucets to hand-washing-only use, with 39 faucets remaining closed, and an OSPI grant for $410,000 pending approval.

Melone also discussed closing a Prairie Elementary portable and removing a Yelm High School portable, including concerns about sagging subflooring and a collapsed floor joist.

Technology updates included wiring closet cleanup at Yelm High School, E-Rate APC UPS projects at the District Office Board Room and Prairie Elementary, districtwide phone upgrades designed to allow phones to function during power outages, and repairs to more than 1,000 Chromebooks.

Food Service launched a newsletter and continued processing meal applications and direct certifications. Melone noted that current benefits are extended through October 20 and that eligibility for schools to offer free meals in 2027–28 requires a 30% or greater application approval rate by October 31, 2026.

Transportation preparations included hiring nine drivers over the summer, with six additional drivers in training and one position remaining open. Routes had been posted and were continuing to be adjusted for new students, preschool, and special education needs. Families were encouraged to download MyRide K12, and students were reminded that RFID cards are required to ride district transportation.

PUBLIC WORKS: APPROVED

Project #	Amount	Vendor/Reason
89.25	$1,155.23	Food Service Equipment – Dishwasher Diagnostics & Repair – YMS
118.25	$34,798.00	Lake Tapps Construction Unlimited – P13/14 Demolition – YHS

147.25	$790.22	Hermanson Co LLP - Chiller Diagnostics - Compressor Alarm for Loss of Charge – YHS
148.25	$1,317.23	Hurley Engineering - Boiler Ignition Transformer Replacement – RMS
149.25	$2,515.32	Hermanson Co LLP – Annual Chiller Maintenance – YHS
150.25	$2,515.32	Hermanson Co LLP – Annual Chiller Maintenance – RMS
151.25	$4,356.60	Hermanson Co LLP - Refrigerant Leak Diagnostics and Repair – YHS

M/Frank King; S/Bill Hauss; Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS
No additional report.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT REPORT
No Report

BOARD COMMENTS
Board members expressed appreciation for the Operations presentation and shared enthusiasm for the start of the new school year. Members thanked district staff for their work preparing for students and recognized the efforts of community members and organizations that consistently support Yelm students through school activities, youth programs, fairs, and other opportunities.

Members also recognized community partners for their continued support of students and welcomed Director of Finance Veronica Birdsong, acknowledging the challenges of her new role and expressing appreciation for her willingness to serve the district.

Discussion also included the upcoming levy communication effort, with members emphasizing the importance of a different and comprehensive approach to community outreach and encouraging broad community involvement. Board members thanked district staff for their continued work, commitment, and service to students and the community.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Superintendent Chris Woods shared that he recently met with a community member for an extended conversation about the levy, answering questions and providing additional information. He expressed appreciation for community members who are willing to engage directly in conversations and learn more about the district's needs.

Woods also provided an update on the district's upcoming levy communications, noting that an eight-week communication plan will begin the following week. The plan is intended to provide detailed information for the community and includes weekly communication activities involving building principals.

Woods concluded by previewing a video created over the summer by recent Yelm High School graduate Hannah Hiiva. The video features students, staff, and alumni sharing their experiences and perspectives about Yelm Community Schools and the sense of community within the district. Woods recognized Heva for independently producing the project and shared that she will be attending the University of Oregon and has begun working with a newspaper in Eugene.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:	Approved by:
/S/Chris M. Woods	/S/Bill Hauss
Secretary to the Board	Board Vice President – Acting on Behalf of the Board President