

**SHERMAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2017**

The Board of Directors of Sherman County School District met in the Sherman County School/Public Library Meeting Room in Moro, Oregon on July 10, 2017. The following were present: Chair, Kristie Coelsch, Vice Chair, Jesse Stutzman; Directors: Bill Martin, Scott Susi, Merrie von Borstel; Principal, Mike Somnis; Business Manager, Kim McKinney; Board Secretary, Jeanie Pehlke; Staff Members: Betsy Casper, Gerald Casper, Cindie King, Lee Jenson, Jen Berry, Jill Jones, Jared Collins, Craig Wood, Amy Huffman, Jarek Bartels; Students: Bri McKinney; Visitors: Molly Belshe, Meghan Belshe, Piper Jones, Neita Cecil, Trevor Fields, Michelle Johnson, Liz Cranston, Laura Perisho, Jean McKinney, Janet Pinkerton, Jim Macnab, John Fields, Dan Funkhouser, Bryan McKinney, Patti Ketchum, Milt Ketchum, Brett Grey, Ree Ella von Borstel, Roger Whitley, Johnathan Rolfe, Chris Kaseberg, Ken Melzer, Kyle Blagg, Katelyn Bartels.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to approve the board meeting agenda as amended. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director von Borstel with second from Director Stutzman to adopt the consent agenda as amended. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to appoint and authorize Jesse Stutzman to execute the Purchase and Sale Agreement and other documents needed to complete the sales transaction for the Grass Valley facility. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director Stutzman with second from Director von Borstel to adopt Policy EFA, the Sherman County School District Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director Susi to appoint Jesse Stutzman to join the classified union negotiations team and Scott Susi to join the certified union negotiations team. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director Stutzman with second from Director von Borstel to appoint Bill Martin, Merrie von Borstel and Kyle Blagg to complete the negotiations of the superintendent contract. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to adopt the amended 403b Plan administrative service agreement. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Kristie Coelsch opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVE BOARD MEETING AGENDA

An opportunity was given to make changes to the presented Regular Board Meeting Agenda for this July 10, 2017 meeting. The following changes were made:

- Delete 4.2.1 – 4.2.4 Contracts for Jen Berry, Kim McKinney, Jeanie Pehlke and Audrey Rooney
- Add 4.2.7 Preliminary Hire of Kevin Stuart, 7-12 Social Studies Teacher
- Amend 5.1 to read “Administrative Report – Mike Somnis”
- Add 5.2 Business Manager Report – Kim McKinney
- Add 6.1.1 Appoint Representative to Execute the Purchase and Sale Agreement and Other Documents Needed to Complete the Sales Transaction for the Grass Valley Facility
- Add 6.4 Appoint Representative to Complete the Negotiations with Certified and Classified Unions
- Add 6.5 Appoint Representative to Complete the Negotiations of the Superintendent Contract
- Delete 7.1 thru 7.1.8 Designations (Action Items)

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to approve the board meeting agenda as amended. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel)

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

Chair Coelsch thanked everyone for coming. She stated that all speakers will be given two minutes for comments and only those who have signed up at this time will be able to speak. She said that all statements are to remain professional and speakers should keep in mind that we are all working together to put student success first.

The following people made comments:

Former Parent, Scholarship Committee Board Member and Office Manager, Jeanie Pehlke read a letter of support for Superintendent Wes Owens that is attached and made part of these minutes.

Parent and Business Manager, Kim McKinney read a letter in support of Superintendent Wes Owens that is attached and made part of these minutes.

Parent, Teacher, and President of the Certified Union, Gerald Casper stated that there were a couple of points that were included in the letter that was read at the July 6, 2017 meeting that he wanted to address in defense of Superintendent Owens. He stated that one of the allegations in the letter is that teachers are leaving and the blame was being placed on Wes Owens due to lack of administrative support. Mr. Casper said, “That is not true.” He gave various examples of how Superintendent Owens has supported teachers. He also said that as

President of the Certified Union he gives an exit interview to every teacher who leaves and no one has ever said that they were leaving because of Superintendent Owens. He added that teachers have left for more pay or convenience of other jobs, but that is a board issue and that has nothing to do with Mr. Owens.

Grandparent, Jean McKinney apologized that the board has not seen the silent majority come out in support of Mr. Owens sooner. She also thanked the board and praised Bill Martin for his years of dedicated service as a board member and encouraged the board to continue to do their work well.

Former Parent, Referee, and Basketball Commissioner, Chris Kaseberg gave his support of Superintendent Owens from the perspective of a referee and his basketball commissioner position. He said that when Wes is here every detail is in order and is done right, and when Wes was gone there was a big change. He added that he has been involved with Wes on a lot of projects and gave his full support to him.

Retired Classified Staff member and former President of the Classified Union, Ree Ella von Borstel gave examples of how three other Superintendents have treated the classified staff. Saying that none of the other Superintendents once stepped into her kitchen and one even referred to her assistant as "that girl". She stated that this has never been the case with Wes Owens. Under his leadership the classified group is treated as part of the educational team and as important as the teachers. She added that as the President of the Classified Union she was always invited into meetings with staff and Wes was always professional. She said that she asked the classified employees what their concerns are for next year with the new principal coming in and one issue is discipline. She said that over the last four years discipline has been lacking and she feels that lack of respect and bullying of teachers is why one teacher left. Chair Coelsch informed Ree Ella that she met the two minute limit. Ree Ella finished her comment by stating that she is behind Wes 100 percent.

Teacher, Lee Jenson, stated that Wes Owens is one of the main reasons he chose to come here. Under Wes he knows he has full command of his classroom with Wes' support. He added that Wes always shows his appreciation by sending thank you notes and is very professional and supportive. He completed his statement by saying that it would be a shame to see him go.

Parent and former Board Member, Jim Macnab read a letter that was not in support of Superintendent Owens. Mr. Macnab reached the two minute limit. The entire letter that was submitted, but not completely read at the meeting is attached and made part of these minutes.

Grandparent, John Fields said that during the Sherman Invitational Basketball Tournament he noticed that Bill Martin was coaching again. Mr. Fields said, "Supposedly he was going to be out for all of the summer league and half of the winter". He said, "I don't know if everyone knows but he head butted *my grandson* at the state tournament. That is an absolute no, no, I don't care whose kid it is, you don't head butt anybody. Wes is backing him on unintentional contact, and as far as I'm concerned they both need to be fired. I know Wes is doing a good job at the school, but he is not a kid person. I think he should be fired." John Fields submitted a letter that was not read at the meeting, but is attached to these minutes.

Teacher, Cindie King read a letter in support for Superintendent Owens this is attached and part of these minutes.

Classified Staff Member, Betsy Casper spoke in support of Superintendent Owens. She said that the first time she met him she knew he had a lot of integrity. She described her education and her math degree and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity Wes Owens has given to serve as a Paraprofessional for the district. She shared her passion for the culture, working with kids and math and agreed that it had been hard under the previous administrations. She added that it doesn't make any sense for anyone to want to fire him. Chair Coelsch informed Mrs. Casper that she had reached the two minute limit.

Parent and Secretary, Jen Berry read a letter in support of Superintendent Owens this is attached to and made part of these minutes.

Former Board Member, Ken Melzer said that it is really nice to hear so many kudos for Superintendent Owens who is very good at giving out kudos to people that support the school. He said that as a former School Board Member he respect Wes' integrity, honesty, vision and goals for the children and people of our district and he admires his work ethic. Mr. Melzer added that he was on the school board when the district hired him and one of the comments that Wes made to him was, "You'll never see anyone out work me". Mr. Melzer said, "I don't think we ever will, he is a very hard worker." Mr. Melzer added that during his time on the school board a strategic plan was developed by Superintendent Owens, school staff, the board members, and citizens. Wes worked with the strategic planning committees to develop a joint vision that included the creation of the one campus, K-12 model school that is best for kids. Mr. Melzer stated that he was on the design committee for the building project when we had other leadership in place and all of a sudden the goals changed. He reiterated that we are very fortunate that Wes came back to see the construction through.

Former Board Member, and volunteer High School Football Coach, Kyle Blagg thanked everyone for coming and said that it is really good to see such support. He also thanked the school board for taking time to listen to everyone. He said that there are a lot of things that he admires about Mr. Owens including his hard work, dedication, care for kids, the strategic plan, and his strategic mind to get things done, but he admires his integrity most of all. He said that everyone is treated the same and that is hard to find.

Former Parent, Scholarship Committee Board Member and volunteer High School Girls Basketball Coach Laurie Perisho said that when her kids were in school and Mr. Owens first came here they liked him, but they had a good fear of him. She said he brought back the respect that was needed in the classrooms, hallways, and school events. She added that everybody needs structure and his decisions always come back to what is best for the kids. She said that she has never seen him act unprofessional and added that he puts a lot of effort in everything. When he attends meetings his comments are well thought and appreciated. She added that she has coached under his administration and he makes sure she has everything she needs and he is interested in the overall picture. She finished her comments by saying that she really appreciates him and what he brings to our school.

Former Board Member, Brett Gray stated that he has had the same experiences as Ken Melzer as a former board member. He said that he appreciates his professionalism and the amount of work he puts out. He added that Wes “always does the extra, always”. Mr. Gray said that he doesn’t think we have ever had a superintendent who has attended so many activities and is so visible. He said it was a different school without him.

Amy Huffman signed up to speak, but stated that she will be sending an email.

Parent and Former Teacher, Liz Cranston stated that she has taught at Sherman for a lot of years and when Mr. Owens became the Superintendent it made her work harder to become a better teacher because he asked for more from her. She said that he always listened and he cared about what she was doing and how she was doing it. She said that as a parent she knows that if there is something wrong or she thinks there is something wrong he listens to her and he genuinely cares about her child.

2016-17 Student Body President, Meghan Belshe said that as the former student body president she had lots of contact with Mr. Owens who always made time to listen to students. She said that she has seen 2 years with him and 2 without him. The change in the past 2 years was outrageous. She said that she always felt emotionally and psychologically safe when Mr. Owens is here. He treats everyone equal and he is a crucial component to bring integrity back to the school. She added that he is thoughtful towards everyone and he is a great component to bring back discipline and equality.

Former Parent, 2016-17 Booster Club President, and Scholarship Committee Board Member, Molly Belshe said that she wanted to echo what Jen Berry and Jean McKinney already said. Her family is coming off ten years of having students in the high school. She said that her kids have all felt safe, respected, and listened to. They were all in student government and all had a lot of contact with Mr. Owens. She said that her oldest daughter got in a little trouble and was disciplined by Wes and the next day everything was fine. She said that he treated her daughter like nothing had happened and added that you don’t find that with all adults. She said that integrity-wise she does not think he is replaceable. She said that we will not find anyone who will put in the time and be as devoted to the kids, or anyone who will do such a good job recruiting good teachers as Wes has done. She finished her comment by thanking the school board and school staff for all that they do. Adding that everyone needs to be praised more.

Parent and Teacher, Jill Jones said that she has been a teacher at Sherman for a year. She said most of what she would like to say has already been said. She echoed what Meghan Belshe said, “You feel safe when Wes is here”. “When I think about the man, I think of the words integrity, professionalism and he is a great listener”. She said that it is so nice to open her email and find a letter of appreciation from him telling everybody what a good job they are doing and how much he appreciates us. She added that it isn’t unusual to find Wes shoveling snow in the winter. She said, “What Administrator does that?” She continued by sharing that every day when she comes to pick up her class at lunch recess he is there making sure everything is going well. She said, “He has a presence”. When he comes into the cafeteria or the classroom everybody comes to attention and those are the kinds of things we need as far as support. She finished her comment by saying that she wanted to lend her support to him.

Chair Coelsch thanked those who spoke and then stated that there were some comments at the last board meeting that were made and at that time the board didn't have facts to respond. She then invited Business Manager Kim McKinney to rebut the comment that Mr. Owens salary was \$165,090 and he worked only 198 days. Mrs. McKinney clarified that the \$165,090 figure is accurate for the total budget for the superintendent's office which includes his salary, benefits, mileage, cell phone reimbursement, postage, dues and fees, supplies, computer software, computer hardware, office supplies, ect. The actual cost the district paid for his salary, and benefits that includes PERS and health insurance in 2015-16 was \$147,141.98. She added that in his contract he is also allocated up to \$1,000 per month for mileage and cell phone reimbursement and in 2015-16 he was only reimbursed \$6,926.19, which is just a little over half of what he is entitled. His total for 2015-16 was \$154,068.17. She said that his contract is for 198 days. However, he actually worked 244 days in 2015-16, which is 46 days over his contract. In 2016-17 his salary and benefits amount was \$146,310.86 and he was reimbursement for his travel and cell phone at just over \$6,400. She added that in 2016-17 he worked 237 days, which is 39 days beyond his contract.

Mrs. McKinney referenced a statement that was made at the last board meeting comparing our Superintendent's salary to The Dalles Superintendent's salary. She said that she contacted neighboring districts Dufur and South Wasco County because they are of similar size student population and verified that our daily rate for the Superintendent's compensation are nearly identical.

Dan Funkhouser asked how many of the allegations that were made against the Superintendent have already been proven to be not factual. He said that he has heard Gerald Casper and Kim McKinney each rebut one and so far none of the allegations have been substantiated. Board members did not know how many, but this led Director Martin to address another comment that was made at the July 6th meeting. Director Martin said that he contacted Steve Kelly at OSBA and the District's attorney related to the statement that the board had improperly amended the agenda for the June 27th meeting to add an item to extend Superintendent Owens' contract. He then read ORS 192.640(1) "The governing body of a public body shall provide for and give public notice, reasonably calculated to give actual notice to interested persons including news media which have requested notice, of the time and place for holding regular meetings." He paused and stated that the board has always abided by this and this meeting was posted within the 24 hour requirement. He continued reading, "The notice shall also include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects." He stated that according to this statute an agenda item can be added. He then read a written statement from Greg Colvin, the District's Attorney, "Oregon statutes for posting public meetings requires that you list the principal subjects anticipated to be covered at the meeting but this requirement shall not limit the ability of the governing body to consider additional subjects, ORS 192.640(1). This statute clearly stated the posting does not limit the topics of discussion at the meeting. If something occurs or comes up during a meeting the board can add it to the agenda. This applies to both public and executive session topics." Director Martin clarified that the board was discussing a contract that had already been publicly approved by the board 2 years ago and this was just an extension of that contract for ten days. He added that no numbers were being changed and this wasn't a new topic. He concluded this rebuttal by

saying that he believes the board took appropriate action because the statue allows the board to do that.

PRESENTATIONS

Recognition of Students, Staff, and Community Members

We are extremely fortunate to have gracious staff and community members who support our school and students. This school year we are continuing the tradition of recognizing various supporters at the beginning portion of each School Board Meeting. While it is possible that we may periodically miss an opportunity to thank someone, we sincerely appreciate the commitment of all of our supporters. We would like to recognize the following people for their devotion to our schools, students, staff and community.

- Thank you to the County and OYCC for their work supporting our custodial staff.
- Gerald Casper for his continued technology support during the summer.
- Thank you to the Athletic Foundation for supporting the Sherman Summer Invitational Basketball Tournament.
- Bill Blevins, Chris Kaseberg, Bill Martin and Brian Stevens for donating their time to officiate basketball games at the Sherman Summer Invitational.
- Thank you to the many parent volunteers who helped at the Sherman Summer Invitational: Jill Martin, Tamar Fritts, Deanna Christiansen, Bill Martin, Jill Jones, Todd Coles, Espana Coles, Sandi Martin, Doug Martin, Trent Harrison, Jill Harrison, Chris Kaseberg,
- Thank you to our student volunteers: Lindsey Jones, Nancy Ambriz, Bri McKinney, Lexi Grenvik, Jacob Justesen, Treve Martin, Makoa Whitaker, Kyle Hensley, Jared Fritts, Reese Blake, Jed Harrison, Nic Riggs, Bryan Macnab, Luke Martin, Tyler Jones
- All coaches and volunteers that assisted with the Sherman County Champions Camp: Kalie Rolfe, Gary Lewis, Kyle Blagg, Steve Bird, Amy Huffman, Ron McDermid, Ethan Moore, and our student volunteers: Makoa Whitaker, Bri McKinney, Owen Christiansen, Kyle Hensley, Luke Martin, Jared Fritts, Caleb Fritts, and Nic Riggs.
- Thank you to the entire boys basketball team for the volunteer efforts at the Sherman County Children's Fair.
- Special thanks to our Champion Camp sponsor, Sherman County Medical Clinic for their financial support.
- Thank you to Jeanie Pehlke for her tremendous work with putting together the Spring Sports Program.
- To Craig Wood, Jack McAllister, Josef Oakley, and Sonoma and Bruce Olsen for their dedicated service in the custodial/maintenance/grounds keeping department.
- Special thanks to Superintendent Wes Owens for the incredible time, effort, diligence and sacrifice he has personally put into this school district.

We truly appreciate the amazing support we receive from so many thoughtful people. Thank you to everyone in our great community and school district for your continued support! When you have time please visit our Sherman County School District Web Page for the monthly appreciation comments.

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Business

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on June 12, 2017.

- Approved Minutes from the Special Board Meeting on June 23, 2017.
- Approved Minutes from the Special Board Meeting on June 27, 2017.
- Approved Bill Listing, Financial Statement.

Personnel

- Approved final hire of Deidra von Borstel, 7-12 Math Teacher.
- Approved final hire of Nancy Reynoldson, Food Service Assistant.
- Approved preliminary hire Kevin Stuart, 7-12 Social Studies Teacher.

Motion by Director von Borstel with second from Director Stutzman to adopt the consent agenda as amended. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel)

Action: The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Administrative Report

Principal Somnis gave an update on staff hiring. He said that the district has hired a social studies teacher and a new counselor who both have excellent references. He added that the new counselor needs housing.

Business Manger Report

Kim McKinney gave certificates of election to the new board members.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Grass Valley Facility Updates

The district has met with the buyer and is in the process of moving files and other items not associated with the sale out of the building. It was noted that the board will need to appoint a representative to handle the sales documents. A short discussion took place.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to appoint and authorize Jesse Stutzman to execute the Purchase and Sale Agreement and other documents needed to complete the sales transaction for the Grass Valley facility. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Policy EFA – Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition – Second Reading

A brief discussion took place. Ree Ella von Borstel gave an explanation of the process that took place to develop the plan.

Motion by Director Stutzman with second from Director von Borstel to adopt Policy EFA, the Sherman County School District Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Board Training

Jeanie Pehlke was asked to contact OSBA and bring back some dates and topics that can be discussed at the next board meeting.

Appoint Representative to Complete the Negotiations with the Certified and Classified Unions

It was determined that because Kyle Blagg and Jim Macnab are no long on the board, other board members need to be appointed to help negotiate the contracts with the certified and classified unions. Chair Coelsch has already been appointed to be on the certified negotiations team and Director von Borstel has already been appointed to be on the classified negotiations team.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director Susi to appoint Jesse Stutzman to join the classified union negotiations team and Scott Susi to join the certified union negotiations team. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Appoint Representative to Complete the Negotiations of the Superintendent Contract

Director Martin suggested that Kyle Blagg and two board members create a committee to negotiate Superintendent Owens' contract. Mr. Blagg agreed to support the process.

Motion by Director Stutzman with second from Director von Borstel to appoint Bill Martin, Merrie von Borstel and Kyle Blagg to complete the negotiations of the superintendent contract. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

It was clarified that this committee will bring back a contract and the entire board will vote to approve the final contract.

NEW BUSINESS

Adopt Amended 403b Plan

Kim McKinney explained the amended 403b Plan.

Motion by Director Martin with second from Director von Borstel to adopt the amended 403b Plan administrative service agreement. **Vote:** 5 in Favor (Coelsch, Martin, Stutzman, Susi, von Borstel) **Action:** The motion carried unanimously.

Board Member Picture

It was suggested that the picture of the board members should be taken at the end of the meeting.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

Chair Coelsch read three letters in support of Superintendent Owens. They were from Susan Mobley, Sherry Kaseberg, and Bert Perisho. All three (3) of these letters are attached and made part of these minutes.

Parent, and Substitute Teacher, Piper Jones praised Superintendent Owens and gave him her complete support to him.

Teacher, Jarek Bartels expressed his complete support of Superintendent Owens stating that he has received a couple of job offers this year and decided to stay here in Sherman County. He

rebutted one of the comments made at the July 6th meeting by saying that Wes Owens will never be the reason that he will leave.

Parent Michelle Johnson stated that she wanted to file a complaint against Mr. Owens related to how her son was treated. She stated that she has a recording of her son being told that no one in the school can stand him and she knows of at least one teacher who left because of him.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS, CLOSING COMMENTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- OSBA Training – Jeanie will come with dates and board will pick topics.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for August 14, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Coelsch declared the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Chair, Kristie Coelsch

Board Secretary, Jeanie Pehlke