

MINUTES

Work Session of the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Corvallis School District 509J
1555 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, OR

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Gable called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 1555 SW 35th Street, Corvallis. Chair Gable dispensed with the calling of the roll and the secretary recorded those present as listed below.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cyrel Gable, Chair
Helen Higgins, Member
Sara Gelser, Member
Kari Rieck, Member
Bob Johnson, Member
Joan Demarest, Member

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED

Nell O'Malley, Vice Chair

EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT

Jim Ford, Superintendent
Dawn Tarzian, Assistant Superintendent
Kathy Rodeman, Business Services Director
Jeanne Holmes, Human Resources Director

GUESTS

Bill Lunch, political analyst
David Dodson, land-use planner

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

Chair Gable announced there would be no discussion on "Corvallis High School Opening Considerations," Item IV of the agenda.

II. ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RESULTS

Director Gelser shared her analysis of the District's failed November 2004 local option levy election results. This was followed by comments from guest Bill Lunch, political analyst.

Director Gelser noted that while there was a larger voter turnout compared to other elections, likely due to the presidential race, the District gained more "no" votes than "yes" when compared to the District's 2002 general obligation bond (which provided for capital improvements). In fact, more people voted "no" than did not vote at all on the measure. She recounted the original local option levy in 1998 passed with only 50.42% of the vote; this latest renewal-plus levy failed by less than a 1% difference between the "yes" and "no" votes. She did

not find a correlation between precincts failing the school levy and whether they voted democrat or republican for local and national officials.

After thanking the Board for the excellent education his now-grown children received, Mr. Lunch stated the most likely explanation for the levy failure was that the message did not penetrate into people's homes well enough. While Corvallis is a highly educated community, people are busy. There is a need for a sophisticated campaign as well as a 30-second message campaign which could co-exist. He reviewed his thoughts as to what the District could do to increase chances of a future levy passing.

Director Gelser suggested mentioning in the upcoming budget talks that the District has \$1.4 million less to work with due to the levy failure and providing examples of what that represents. The eliminated/reduced items could be named in a future levy's campaign literature.

Mr. Lunch related that there is a bill in the legislature now to repeal the double majority requirement (which prohibits the approval of property tax increases in special elections, unless there is at least a 50 percent voter turn-out for the election.) but he doubted that it would make it through the State house. Even so, it would still have to go before the voters, which would be after the 2006 general election. He noted that the double-majority rule is a substantial hurdle and adds a level of complexity to a campaign.

Chair Gable stated that the presidential election may have overshadowed the importance of the District levy which did not draw voters' attention as much.

Director Gelser recognized a need for the District to continually communicate what the loss has meant, not just in the months prior to an election.

(See the December 13, 2004 work session minutes for a related discussion.)

III. CERTIFIED LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

Chair Gable announced that a tentative agreement had been reached in the certified labor negotiations. Once the Corvallis Education Association approves the agreement it will come before the Board for approval, hopefully in the next week.

IV. LONG RANGE BOUNDARY PLAN

Superintendent Ford distributed a draft plan of his "509J Program and Resources Review, 2005-06," which was a refinement of the "School Boundaries Report" he presented December 6, 2004. The document was an outline of considerations, processes, and timing for a review which would enable the District to focus on delivering the most effective educational programs efficiently. The process would give credence to previous District reports as well as examining new territory. District staff would perform preliminary work gathering information prior to the review's

commencement. Chair Gable announced that the Board's input was being sought to refine the plan for adoption at the March meeting.

Through discussion, it was ascertained that

- If a consultant were used to oversee the process (recommended by Superintendent Ford) funding could come from the unallocated portion of Superintendent Ford's reduced salary.
- The Long Range Facilities Plan had not been reviewed since its inception (February 25, 2002)

In considering which of the two presented options would be best for carrying out the review, the Board chose a hybrid which provides for public input this spring in defining the criteria as well as next fall. If there are to be any attendance boundary changes as a result of the review, Chair Gable stated that they would need to be determined by November.

Chair Gable summarized the conversation as directing staff to begin work on gathering information soon and that Mr. Dodson would start pulling together the pieces that could be taken to the public this spring for developing criteria on some of these decisions. The criteria would then be developed and prioritized by a Board subcommittee by June. The resulting guide would then be presented to the public late summer/early September. The Board subcommittee would then illustrate how the criteria would be applied to the reviewed programs.

Members then provided comments on individual items in the draft suggesting Wilson Core Knowledge and Lincoln's programs be included as well as a few changes in language.

V. CORVALLIS HIGH SCHOOL OPENING CONSIDERATIONS

Chair Gable announced that this item was being postponed until the March 7 Board meeting as staff were gathering additional information to answer likely Board questions on the topic more fully. The additional time provided the opportunity for Board members to submit related questions that could be addressed at the next meeting as well. Chair Gable noted questions members offered during the meeting and asked them to email her with any others.

VI. REVIEW OF 2005-06 AND 2006-07 SCHOOL CALENDARS

Teacher Jeff Brew, parent Kathy Higdon, and Human Resources Director Jeanne Holmes presented the Board with their committee's proposal for the 2005-06 and the 2006-07 school calendars and their rationale. The committee received feedback on their initial proposals from staff and parents which resulted in the drafts presented to the Board this evening.

Chair Gable announced that the calendars would be presented for adoption at the March meeting so this was an opportunity for members to provide input.

Members did not raise concerns with the 2005-06 calendar.

Regarding the suggestion that the 2006-07 winter break begin and end mid-week, Ms. Holmes responded that when that had been done in the past many students were absent at either end of the half-weeks, not popular with teachers. The proposal has the last day of school before winter break being Friday, December 22, with Christmas being the following Monday. Members felt that students who had to travel very far might be gone the last days of school prior to the break. Director Gelser asked that the input for the 2006-07 calendar be done by November 2005, so that the controversial winter break period can be solidified for those making holiday plans.

VII. ADJOURN

Being no further business, Chair Gable adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Cyrel Gable, Chair

Jim Ford, Superintendent

Prepared by: Jolene Shute
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