

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Check

Chair Rebecca Dyson called the meeting to order and a roll check confirmed that all five directors were present.

2. Land Acknowledgment

Student Representative Azaleah Davis-Powell read the Land Acknowledgment.

3. Adoption of Agenda *(At this time Board members are provided the opportunity to amend the Regular Session agenda.)*

Vice Chair Jill Franko moved and Director Russell Hatch seconded the adoption of the January 9 agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

4. Consent Agenda *(All items may be adopted by a single motion unless pulled for special consideration.)*

Director Eva Skuratowicz moved and Director Russell Hatch seconded approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

4.A. Approval of Minutes of December 12, 2024, regular session

4.B. Personnel Report for January 2025

4.C. Enrollment Report for January 2025

5. Recurring Reports

5.A. AHS Student Report

AHS student representative Owen Taylor reported that before winter break, AHS held its Winter Fine Arts Festival, followed by a basketball game the same evening. AHS sent students off to enjoy winter break with their “Winter Rally”. One prize winner received a basket “full of bounty” to share with their family and students in attendance had a great time. Finals week begins January 21 and runs through January 24. Leadership is working with the Black Student Union to highlight the life and history of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in whose name the holiday is held. AHS student representative Azaleah Davis-Powell reported on very successful food and clothing drives that students sponsored, along with a drive to collect food and items for animals. They had a great response and the drives were very successful. Mr. Taylor reported that during the upcoming weekend, AHS athletes would compete in Girls and Boys basketball, and Nordic skiing competitions, along with wrestling and swim meets. Director Skuratowicz asked where the teams currently swim and Ms. Davis-Powell responded that teams still use the Daniel Meyer Pool in Ashland.

5.B. OSEA Report

OSEA member James Johnson said that Helman certified staff are reporting that their classified staff are “hitting it out of the park” – and cited custodians, bus drivers, food servers, student advocates, etc. AHS is sorting through its used equipment and passing some along to

AMS for middle school students. The Brain Bowl at AMS, which Mr. Johnson coaches, has two teams in Division A. At the high school, the Truth to Power Club collaborates with the student National Art Society and the Black Student Union to replace the Say Their Names display, which was vandalized again. Director Dan Ruby asked whether donations of money or materials would be welcome and Mr. Johnson said they definitely would be.

5.C. AEA Report

AEA President Tia McLean began by expressing appreciation to the Board members who serve as unpaid volunteers, in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month. She expressed gratitude to Director Skuratowicz for being a tenacious advocate for kids and bringing her research prowess to addressing inequities; to Director Ruby for his dedicated and valuable investments of time and curiosity towards promoting investments in funding for public education; to Chair Dyson for her dedication, her diplomatic and efficient efforts to serve as a transparent chair person, and for uplifting the arts. Ms. McLean complimented Vice Chair Franko for her visionary work to close gaps in education, protect equal access for students, and commitment to positive change with Sunstone; and to Director Hatch for his super powers of being an involved dad, a kind martial arts teacher, and calmly meeting challenges with a holistic and approachable style.

She gave highlights from the sites. AMS is beginning its second trimester and Ms. McLean cited Mary Ann Wallace for her service as an EA at AMS and previously at Helman. Helman educators designated *responsibility* as the theme of the month. OBOB teams are working hard and Helman thanks its PTA members for strong support. There are ongoing concerns about lower numbers of educational assistants.

The TRAILS PTC raised money for a new seating area in the front courtyard and students are enjoying it. A Bingo night fund raiser is coming up. There is a desire for consistent math intervention supports for students who need extra help. Walker is ready to learn. Teachers raised a concern about possible shortages of copy paper. The annual march in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will take place on Friday when students march to SOU for a program. Willow Wind is holding two weeks of January workshops for all students in the afternoons after winter break. Many skills and projects are offered for learning and creative opportunities.

6. **Board Reports**

Director Skuratowicz reported that she attended the regional OSBA session with southern Oregon legislators. Districts from all over the region attended with elected leaders listening to successes and challenges among public schools. Director Ruby reported on efforts of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Two Spirit (LGBT2) Committee of OSBA (Oregon School Board Association) The recent membership vote on adding a Pride Caucus to the OSBA Board failed. However, OSBA remains committed to equity on behalf of staff and students, and its Board will be discussing what more it might do.

Vice Chair Franko said that the Board held a goal setting retreat in December that she found excellent, she met with our AHS student reps, and she attended the OSBA legislative meeting, which was a good one. School board members are all trying to advocate for their districts, and looking for solution ideas from other school districts. Both Willow Wind and TRAILS winter fairs were a big success.

Director Hatch talked to with Oregon Representative Emily McIntire to learn what legislators need to hear from us to make a difference. A new legislative session is starting soon and there is a system where the public can check on education bills that are coming up, can submit written and oral testimony about its impacts, voice their concerns, and so on. It is important for legislators to hear from the public and this offers options to communicate. It is called OLIS (Oregon Legislative Information System) and can be reached at <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1>

Chair Dyson reported that she attended the AHS winter arts festival which always offers a wonderful array of student artistic endeavors in all fields.

6.A. Budget Committee for 2025-2026 Budget Year

Chair Dyson announced that there is a vacancy on the district budget committee and encouraged interested community members to apply.

6.B. ACTION ITEM: Board Goals

There was a brief presentation on the annual goals developed by the board members, designed to align with the district strategic plan and the superintendent's goals.

6.C. 2025 School Board Elections

Elections for Oregon school boards will be held in May 2025 and the district offers resources for prospective candidates interested in running.

7. Hear Public Comments (*The Ashland School District Board of Directors reserves this time for individuals to relay comments in writing to the Board regarding topics, not on the printed agenda.*)

Steven Essig, a resident of Ashland, spoke on a resolution by the American Historical Association to condemn the destruction of the education systems in Gaza, including destruction of schools, libraries, archives, and historical sites.

George Dohrman, a resident of Ashland, spoke on the potential loss of Lincoln Field and the impact to student athletics programs.

Kai Victor, a high school soccer coach, spoke on the potential loss of Lincoln Field and the impact to student athletics programs.

Marie Caballero Uhtoff, the head coach of the girls varsity soccer team, spoke on the potential loss of Lincoln Field and the impact to student athletics programs.

8. Student Representative Report

Representative Azaleah Davis-Powell said that she appreciated learning about school finances and the budget challenges in her role. She wrote an article to share more of that information with other students that was published in the recent Rogue News. She reported that students are back "in the swim" after winter break.

Representative Owen Taylor expressed thanks to the school board members for their service and for including students. He and Ms. Davis-Powell sat in on a leadership planning meet with Dr. Hattrick. He also reported that since Officer Mike Bates has been the AHS School Resource Officer (SRO) he is hearing from other Ashland PD officers that students are waving at them in friendly ways. He is glad that Dr. Hattrick is working to create a superintendent advisory

committee to bring more student voices drawn from a wider group of students to district planning and decision making.

9. Superintendent Report

9.A. ACTION ITEM: School Board Appreciation Month

Dr. Hattrick reported that in December the Ashland Rotary Club recognized Amara Lowe as its Student of the Month. Amara was described as an 11th grade student who embodies qualities many qualities of excellence. Teachers spoke of her brilliance as a dedicated, diligent student. Evidence of her heart for others is found in her generous, sympathetic interactions with her peers. She is a leader in extra-curricular activities as a leader of the Black Student Union, and a volunteer with the Native American Student Union. She has a balance of great competence and humility.

Dr. Hattrick has recently spent time with Oregon Senator Jeff Golden, Representatives Emily McIntire and Pam Marsh to become more acquainted with legislation impacting public education. He will be doing a legislative advocacy training and is speaking at the annual Ashland celebration of Martin Luther King Day on January 20. He will attend the employee ice skating event sponsored by the District Health Policy Committee on January 15. Ashland Schools Foundation Executive Director Erica Thomson recently picked up the boxes of thank you cards from staff and students for the anonymous donor who contributed \$890,000 to the District in support of student instruction.

The District and AEA finished bargaining earlier in the day. He will probably request a short special session next week to recommend that the Board ratify the final agreement, once it is approved by the AEA membership. He announced that staff and student furlough days will occur on March 5-6-7 and April 11 and 14, and June 2. These apply to the current school year only. He thanked both employee bargaining units for support and good suggestions during this process of planning necessary budget reductions.

Dr. Hattrick announced the retirement of his executive assistant and board secretary Jackie Schad on February 28 and Director of Business Services Scot Whitman on January 31. Both positions are posted. He sought an interim business manager and successfully recruited Sherry Ely, who was highly recommended by our OASBO consultant Jackie Olsen. She has been working in school finance for 33 years, at the Grants Pass School District for 31 years and then the Northwest Educational Service District. She starts February 1 and will serve as Interim Business Services Manager through the end of July 2025 to help recruit and onboard a new permanent business manager.

Dr. Hattrick then read his proclamation recognizing the Ashland school board members during Oregon's School Board Recognition Month. He encouraged others throughout the community to recognize the many hours of volunteer service board members donate to our students. He thanked Rebecca Dyson, Jill Franko, Russell Hatch, Dan Ruby, Eva Skuratowicz, Owen Taylor, Azaleah Davis-Powell, Toby Pew, and Max Hoerrmann.

10. Bond Report

10.A. Monthly Report December 2024

HMK Program Director Mike Freeman briefly reported on continuing completion work at the high school. Crews had some issues with steel work when they found rust in the perforated

steel walls prior to installation for the Humanities Building. They needed to be cleaned and re-powder coated. Contractors are working through post construction punch lists, looking for any things that need to be remedied. They are verifying mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems to certify them. Teams are still completing fire alarm systems in some buildings. The electrical gear for the chiller in the gym is scheduled to arrive in May and this will be completed in June. The high school seismic project is continuing in the construction documents phase, for bids to go out in March or April. That work will happen in summer of 2025.

The second phase of the solar project is progressing and they are seeking feedback on two potential sites. Both are good candidates and they would welcome board feedback.

10.B. Comprehensive Overview of Ashland High School Bond Projects

Executive Director of Operations Steve Mitzel began the presentation by reviewing the original bond promise language that was in the bond approval referendum passed in 2018. When construction plans were finally drawn, the COVID period made us press pause on the high school modernization for a time. Mr. Freeman outlined the first phase in summer of 2022, which was exterior construction to achieve ADA compliance with ramps, stairs, parking lot access, and other changes.

In spring and summer of 2023, construction began on the Humanities Building. Planning was organized around the intention to minimize students having to use modularity by careful rotation of classes back and forth to Lincoln in timed phases. The priority was the seismic upgrade beginning with the basement and first floor, including a foundation for a new elevator. Structural supports were done first. This involved significant excavation under the building to remove earth and build a framework of steel rebar and structural columns to bring the building to modern standards. HVAC improvements were also started along with IT infrastructure, adding building automation for major systems like heating, cooling, and lighting. New doors and security measures were installed, along with fire suppression systems. On the science building, all three stair cases were replaced.

In Fall and Winter 2023-24, the Humanities Building continued and the first phase of the Science Building commenced. While seismic work continued, classroom reconfigurations were started in the Science Building. In the spring and summer of 2024, major work continued. Seismic work at Level 3 of Humanities was started and classes began to return in the first and second levels. Mr. Mitzel reviewed the decision process about the decorative tile mosaic installed as outside cladding in the Humanities Building. Technical upgrades were done in Sciences and some auxiliary buildings like the AHS gym. Again, HVAC, electrical and fire suppression systems, plumbing improvements, and exterior and interior security systems were installed. New accessible restrooms were built in both buildings.

Substantial completion of the high school modernization projects is expected to be done in March of 2025. The Science seismic will start in the spring and the installation of chillers and control systems should be done in the summer of 2025. The HVAC systems are still being balanced to achieve ideal temperatures through different seasons and weather conditions.

The construction team has identified two potential sites for installation of the remaining solar project we owe for our commitment to sustainable energy requirements by the state. One is to build solar canopy structures over the Science parking lot at 201 W. Mountain. Cars would

have some shade and the solar panels would have optimum exposure to sunlight. This site has good visibility to the community, would not require significant earth moving, and would be movable if a future bond aims to replace this building. The second site is in the maintenance yard at 212 Walker Ave. This site would require significant trenching, would eliminate a large storage space now used by facilities staff to store materials, and would generate more kilowatt hours. It would be more difficult to construct.

Director Ruby appreciated the careful review of our seismic work, which is a major new contribution to student safety. He is reassured about the work. Mr. Mitzel said that we will continue to seek financial support for seismic retrofits on more buildings.

11. Finance Report

11.A. Finance Report as of January 6, 2025

Director of Business Services Scott Whitman presented the fiscal report on December activities. Revenues are reported for the General Fund #100 only. This report shows a lower property tax collection than projected in last month's report. The property assessments in Ashland did not grow as much as we projected last year and so the collection is lower. Any difference, however, will be offset by an increase in state school funds. The private donation received through Ashland Schools Foundation did increase over our original projections for private fund raising. The beginning fund balance for this year changed after two large audit adjustments to the prior year. They increased the projected negative fund balance from \$1.4 million to more than \$2 million. This resulted from a requirement to replenish a special revenue fund that was overspent. This change did not impact our cash position.

There were some adjustments to expense projections as we move further into the year and get a better sense of our actual spending. The projections do not show the impacts on compensation resulting from bargaining, furlough days, or other planned spending cuts.

11.B. ACTION ITEM: Budget Resolution 2024-2025 and Appropriation Correction January 2025

Mr. Whitman reported an error in the budget appropriation document presented to the Board at its July 2024 meeting. He is requesting a correction to that document and also an appropriation transfer to reflect the change he is asking the Board to approve. The corrected documents will be submitted to ODE and to the Secretary of State.

Director Skuratowicz moved to correct the 2024-2025 Budget Appropriation as presented and further moved to transfer the appropriation of \$677,841 from Contingency to Unappropriated within the Internal Fund. Director Ruby seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

11.C. ACTION ITEM: FY 2023-2024 Audit Report and Corrective Action Plan

Director of Business Services Scott Whitman presented the audit report for FY2023-2024 and noted some findings reported concerning the district's exceeding the board approved appropriations in certain categories. Oregon law requires that a Corrective Action Plan to address these be approved by the Board and submitted to the Secretary of State. Director Ruby moved and Director Skuratowicz seconded the approval of the Corrective Action Plan as proposed. The motion carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

12. ACTION ITEM: Transitions in Business Services Department

12.A. The Superintendent recommends that Interim Business Services Manager Sherry Ely be appointed Deputy Clerk for the period February 1, 2025-June 30, 2025.

12.B. The Superintendent recommends that Interim Business Services Manager Sherry Ely be appointed Budget Officer from February 1, 2025-June 30, 2025.

12.C. The Superintendent recommends that Interim Business Services Manager Sherry Ely be designated as a custodian of funds for the period February 1, 2025-June 30, 2025, in conjunction with the Superintendent.

12.D. Loss Coverage: The clerk and deputy clerk are bonded for \$500,000. All employees of the Ashland School District are covered to this level through a comprehensive liability insurance policy.

Dr. Hattrick reported that these authority designations will empower our incoming Interim Business Services Manager Sherry Ely to assume her position on February 1, the first day after Mr. Whitman's retirement from the district. Director Skuratowicz noted that the draft motion in the board agenda contained the wrong numbers for the four items and offered an amended motion that Items 12A through 12D be adopted as presented. Director Hatch seconded the amended motion which carried by unanimous vote of the members present.

13. Unfinished Business

There was none.

14. New Business

There was none.

15. Announcements and Appointments

Chair Dyson read the announcements of upcoming meetings.

16. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Dyson adjourned the meeting at 9:34 pm.

Submitted by:

Jackie Schad, Board Secretary

Dated for Board Approval: February 13, 2025

Board Chair Rebecca Dyson

Superintendent Joseph Hattrick