

**MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

December 5, 2018

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on November 30, 2018, and published in *The Register-Guard* on December 5, 2018.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Alicia Hays, Chair
Anne Marie Levis, Vice Chair
Eileen Nittler
Judy Newman
Evangelina Sundgrenz
Jim Torrey
Mary Walston

STAFF:

Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Superintendent of Schools
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary
Sharon Myrand, Budget and Reporting Supervisor

MEDIA: KRVM.

OTHER: Josh Burstein.

I. WORK SESSION: INTERVIEW BUDGET COMMITTEE APPLICANTS

Chair Hays opened the work session at 5:30 p.m. She explained the budget committee interview process.

The board members separated into two "teams." The green team would interview one applicant, the yellow team a second, and so on. Each team would ask the same questions of applicants. Each applicant was reserved 10 minutes maximum. Chair Hays clarified all board member notes were public record, so they needed to be returned to Ms. Fjordbeck after the meeting.

There were 12 candidates to serve on the budget committee. Each applicant has been scheduled for a time during this work session to be briefly interviewed about their interest and qualifications to serve on the budget committee.

In the order of the scheduled interviews, the 12 candidates were:

Jeff Oliver
Nick Larsen
Elizabeth Price
Scott Landgreen

Sean Shivers
Jennifer Winters Francois
Christina D. Howard
John Gogol
Debra Miller
Mary Leighton
Barton Hiroyuki
Aikens Dylan
John Mead

At the next regular board meeting on December 19, the board would ballot to select two candidates to serve three-year terms on the budget committee that run through June 30, 2021.

1. Jeff Oliver

Mr. Torrey asked for Mr. Oliver to please give a brief description of his experience or training. Mr. Oliver responded his experience was a mix of everything listed on his resume. He was involved with the South Eugene High School baseball team and understood how to handle privately raised dollars with public dollars. Mr. Oliver also worked at the YMCA, a nonprofit, where he had to use every dollar as far as possible. He did the same as small business owner, where he had a personal stake in finances.

Ms. Levis asked about Mr. Oliver's involvement in public education and local schools. Mr. Oliver had attended public schools. As mentioned previously, he was involved with the baseball team.

Ms. Nittler asked how he could personally contribute to the budget committee. Mr. Oliver responded he recently met with parents of the baseball team, and it wasn't a productive meeting because no one had answers to budget questions. Many parents were unclear how public money was spent on sports and other activities. He explained they didn't always see everything the district provided, and one way he could help was to bridge that gap.

Chair Hays wondered how involved Mr. Oliver was with the budget at the YMCA. Mr. Oliver responded he learned how to read and review a large budget. Chair Hays asked if he had to share and explain the budget to board members. Mr. Oliver said yes, staff would interpret the budget for the YMCA board of directors.

Ms. Walston asked for his understanding of how Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) defined a budget committee for a public body budget. Mr. Oliver reviewed the PDF provided by district staff packet and knew how to look up ORS as needed.

Ms. Newman wondered how Mr. Oliver would suggest being more transparent with parents when it came to budgets. Mr. Oliver thought it was mostly about having conversations with parents and explaining specific costs.

2. Nick Larsen

Ms. Walston asked for a brief description of Mr. Larsen's experience and training. Mr. Larsen ran a business in town and had three kids enrolled in district schools. He had a vested interest in the district's future. Additionally, Mr. Larsen had ties within the community that could lead to additional funding sources, specifically to support athletics and extracurriculars.

Ms. Sundgrenz wondered what Mr. Larsen's involvement was with public education. Mr. Larsen worked with many school districts providing various fundraising opportunities for athletic programs. He also volunteered in his daughter's kindergarten classroom.

Ms. Newman asked what Mr. Larsen would personally contribute to the budget committee if appointed. Mr. Larsen would bring his experience and contacts he had, to acquire additional donations and solicit extra funds. He was passionate about supporting extracurricular activities.

Ms. Walston asked if Mr. Larsen understood budget committees as structured by ORS. Mr. Larsen wanted to be transparent and said he didn't have a great understanding.

Ms. Newman noted Mr. Larsen had experience volunteering in kindergarten; she wondered if he saw any needs in the classroom. Mr. Larsen said teachers were overwhelmed, and there wasn't enough staffing. He wasn't sure of an exact solution.

Mr. Larsen appreciated the opportunity to apply for a budget committee position and thought he could contribute positively if appointed. Recently, he compared participation costs for district athletics to other programs, and they were significantly higher in 4J. He would like to find out why and explore how to reduce those costs or identify more funding.

3. Elizabeth Price

Mr. Torrey asked for a brief description of Ms. Prices' experience and training that qualified her to serve. Ms. Price had been an accountant for 30 years, working with businesses in both California and Oregon. She had been involved in their budgetary processes and was currently working with Lane County. Ms. Price was also the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) treasurer at McCornack Elementary School and loved giving back to the community.

Ms. Levis wondered how Ms. Price had been involved in public education and local schools. Ms. Price said her stepsons attended district schools, and her children currently attended McCornack Elementary School. As previously mentioned, she served as the PTO treasurer, and worked closely with the school's office administrator to provide financial information about the school to parents and the PTO board.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked what Ms. Price would contribute as a budget committee member. Ms. Price wanted to help provide improved feedback and financial information to parents; many parents wondered who decided how money was spent. With her background, Ms. Price thought she could assist in the allocation and review process.

Ms. Walston asked if Ms. Price understood ORS budget law and how it related to public bodies. Ms. Price wasn't sure, as she didn't do research on it yet.

Ms. Price asked whether the board took the budget committee's recommendation, or if there was further discussion. Chair Hays said the discussion usually happened together.

Ms. Newman was curious what Ms. Price thought the budget committee should prioritize, as a school volunteer. Ms. Price said everything was connected, and the budget needed to be considered holistically. She hesitated to suggest a priority like smaller class sizes, because that could cause something else to be off balance. There were many other aspects to consider such as nutrition, the arts, etc.

4. Scott Landgreen

Ms. Walston asked for a brief description of Mr. Landgreen's experience and qualifications. Mr. Landgreen was the prior director of health and fitness for the Pasadena YMCA, so he had experience building and working within budgets. As a prior business owner, he also had experience dealing with profit and loss.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked about Mr. Landgreen's involvement with public education, specifically with 4J schools. Mr. Landgreen did have an outdated teaching credential, and previously taught Career Technical Education (CTE) at a tech school in Australia for about five years. Since then, he was president of the Booster Club at North Eugene High School.

Ms. Newman asked what Mr. Landgreen could personally contribute to the budget committee. Mr. Landgreen was an "idea guy," but understood that when dealing with numbers, sometimes ideas conflicted. He saw the budget committee as having influence in ensuring dollars were used creatively but wisely. With the 2018 bond measure, Mr. Landgreen thought the district had an opportunity to channel funds toward North Eugene High School, particularly to support a CTE focused curriculum and facility.

Ms. Walston asked if Mr. Landgreen had a thorough understanding of ORS relating to budget committees. Mr. Landgreen had not explored ORS in that regard.

5. Sean Shivers

Mr. Torrey asked for Mr. Shiver's experience and training in relation to serving on the budget committee. Mr. Shivers was skilled at taking complex data and synthesizing it into one document. Additionally, he worked at a variety of nonprofits and provided budgetary suggestions. Mr. Shiver also worked at six local radio stations, where he heard folks' advertising needs and then put together a corresponding budget plan.

Ms. Levis asked what involvement Mr. Shiver had with public education. During his education, Mr. Shiver attended public schools. He also wanted to support district community members and activists, and the main way to become involved locally was to serve on boards and committees.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked what Mr. Shiver would contribute to the budget committee. Mr. Shiver wanted to advocate for activists. He also served on the City of Eugene's police commission, where he talked to neighborhood associations and activists to solicit their thoughts.

Ms. Walston asked if Mr. Shiver understood ORS around budget committees. Mr. Shiver didn't specifically, but he was aware of public meeting laws.

Ms. Newman what Mr. Shiver thought of budget priorities. Mr. Shiver knew there was emphasis on class sizes, to avoid behavioral problems and ensure all students were being served equally.

6. Jennifer Winter Francois (called in)

Ms. Francois called in for the interview.

Ms. Walston asked for a brief description of Ms. Francois' training and experience. Ms. Francois had been a member of the budget committee for six years, and a volunteer for many years otherwise. She was honored for the opportunity to continue her work.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked for Ms. Francois to expand on her experience within public schools and 4J in particular. Ms. Francois had kids in the 4J district and was an active volunteer in classrooms and schools. As a member of the budget committee, she was chair of the bond committee in 2014 and chaired the entire campaign for the 4J levy in 2015.

Ms. Newman asked what she could contribute to the budget committee if she were reappointed. Ms. Francois had a passion for volunteerism, and a wealth of knowledge. Her formal training wasn't around budgets, but she brought the perspective of a parent and community member.

Ms. Walston wondered if Ms. Francois understood ORS budget law for public bodies. Ms. Francois thought she had a pretty good understanding; the district was required to work with a budget committee in creating an annual budget. The budget committee had to provide recommendations to the board within a certain amount of time, however members didn't have a voting role.

Ms. Newman asked Ms. Francois about her highest priorities. Ms. Francois thought modern schools faced many challenges in how to serve a diverse set of students. Each individual student needed access to an education that allowed them to flourish. It was difficult to create the right environments without sufficient resources, so balance was necessary.

7. Christina D. Howard

Mr. Torrey asked for Ms. Howard's experience and qualifications. Ms. Howard owned her own practice as a physical therapist, so was familiar with budget building. She was also a full-time faculty member at Lane Community College where she had to manage a budget and also complete grant reporting.

Ms. Levis wondered how Ms. Howard was involved with public education, mostly 4J schools. Ms. Howard was involved with the PTO at Adams Elementary and she participated in the district-wide strategic planning process. Ms. Howard also acted as a site council representative at Adams Elementary School.

Ms. Nittler wanted to know how Ms. Howard would personally contribute to the budget committee. Ms. Howard brought great attention to detail and truly wanted to understand a budget, as she thought reflected values of the organization. She thought organizations sometimes found themselves in a rut by only updating the past fiscal year's budget; by taking a strategic look, missed opportunities and persistent inequities could be identified and addressed. Ms. Walston asked for her understanding of ORS budget law. Ms. Howard responded all budget meetings had to take place in public, allow for public comment, and reported in a timely manner to appropriate channels. The ORS must be adhered to; if it were not followed, there were statutory actions taken...

Ms. Newman asked for her thoughts about public school priorities, and what she wanted to see reflected within a budget. Ms. Howard wanted every parent to look at the budget and see their child in it, as well as future opportunities for access to services.

The board took a break from 6:57 p.m. to 7:07 p.m.

8. John Gogol

Ms. Walston asked Mr. Gogol to briefly describe his qualifications. Mr. Gogol worked as a budget analyst for school districts within the community and had worked with 4J. He thought he had extensive budget experience, as he had been through five annual budget cycles, including adoption, monitoring, managing, and maintenance.

Mr. Gogol explained that prior to working with schools, he worked in financial planning services for businesses.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked for Mr. Gogol's involvement with public schools and 4J specifically. Mr. Gogol hadn't been very active yet, as he didn't have children in the district, but had lived within the community for many years. He followed the most recent bond process and wanted to become involved. Additionally, he recently contemplated becoming a middle school mentor.

Ms. Newman asked how Mr. Gogol would personally contribute. Mr. Gogol had personal experience and a thorough understanding of the budget making process. He would take a big picture look at budget questions and the strategic plan to help ensure consistency. Mr. Gogol also believed oversight was highly important.

Ms. Walston wondered if Mr. Gogol understood ORS budget law. Mr. Gogol thought the law guided budget development and maintenance process. There were certain requirements the budget committee and district needed to meet.

Ms. Newman wondered his thoughts on priorities for schools in 4J. Mr. Gogol said the district was constrained for resources. The slow growth in funding overall affected PERS, programmatic issues around instruction, and more.

9. Debra Miller (called in)

Mr. Torrey asked for a description of Ms. Miller's training that qualified her for service. Ms. Miller said her son was a sophomore at South Eugene High School, and over the last 3.5 years she held various executive positions at PeaceHealth in Vancouver. At PeaceHealth, she managed a substantial budget.

Ms. Levis asked for involvement with public education and 4J schools... Ms. Miller explained prior to moving to Oregon, she worked on the PTO for a charter school in California and managed that budget. She volunteered in a variety of capacities, starting with Edgewood Elementary School, Spencer Butte Middle School, and South Eugene High School.

Ms. Walston wondered if Ms. Miller was familiar with ORS and budget committees. Ms. Miller was unfamiliar with ORS in relation to schools, but familiar with ORS for medical professionals so she understood the oversight involved.

Ms. Nittler asked Ms. Miller what she could contribute to the budget committee. Ms. Miller had a strong interest in education and that tax dollars were directed appropriately. She was a board member of the Lane County Workforce Partnership board and she was surprised to learn of the low high school graduation rate in Oregon. She was passionate about improving the rate and providing access to resources and post-graduation opportunities.

Ms. Newman asked if Ms. Miller had any thoughts on school budget priorities. Ms. Miller was passionate about improving the district's graduation rate, and providing access to post-graduation opportunities, whether it was workforce training or college.

Mr. Torrey wondered if she heard from people who were looking to move to Eugene. Ms. Miller spoke with many candidates interviewing for medical positions, and she was proud to say the 4J district was a great resource. Often, people were more concerned about housing options.

10. Mary Leighton

Ms. Walston asked for Ms. Leighton's experience and training. Ms. Leighton had worked on education from every angle and had also worked in the private sector where she managed budgets.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked for her involvement with 4J schools. Ms. Leighton was retired and volunteered at many schools. She also served on the board at Network Charter School.

Ms. Newman asked what Ms. Leighton would personally contribute if she was appointed. Ms. Leighton said she would bring personal experience. She had worked as a policy researcher and saw how budgets affected education. Additionally, she wrote her dissertation on job training, which had come to be very helpful professionally. Part of her volunteerism was to explain how current economics affected jobs, so teachers could prepare students accordingly.

Ms. Walston wondered if Ms. Leighton had knowledge of ORS. Ms. Leighton wasn't sure but knew she could learn.

Ms. Newman wondered about Ms. Leighton's biggest priorities for schools. Ms. Leighton believed everyone was made how they were supposed to be; schools were meant to help kids celebrate their individual skills and connect students to communities where they could prosper.

11. Barton Hiroyuki Aikens

Mr. Torrey asked for Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens to describe experiences that qualified him for service. Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens was president for Singing Creek Nature Center, a nonprofit that specialized in pioneer education. In that role, he managed a budget. Besides that, Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens was involved with the development committee for Lane Historical Society, where he wrote grants and helped with the budget. Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens was now retired, but prior to that, he worked for a large law firm and wrote proposals. He was used to reviewing budgets and integrating needs.

Ms. Levis asked for Mr. Hiroyuki-Aikens to describe his involvement with public education. Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens went to 4J schools himself. He volunteered in the 1980s, and his mother worked for 4J as an educator.

Ms. Nittler asked what Mr. Hiroyuki-Aikens could contribute. He responded that he knew how to review and scrutinize budgets. Budgets were always dynamic,

Ms. Walston wondered if he was familiar with ORS budget law. Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens didn't know much information beyond the document sent to him by district staff.

Ms. Newman asked for Mr. Hiroyuki Aiken's thoughts on where school priorities should be. Mr. Hiroyuki Aikens thought it was a very complicated question. For years, the state was supposed to play a larger role in funding. There were a lot of good ideas, but it was about connecting those ideas to appropriate funding sources.

12. Dylan John Mead

Ms. Walston asked why Mr. Mead was qualified to hold a position on the budget committee. Mr. Mead's education was in math and physics, so he had experience in quantitative analysis. He also acted as a tutor for LCC students and currently worked for an accounting firm as a security "auditor." He analyzed various organizations, both public and private, and ensured certain controls met state mandated requirements. After analysis, he would make recommendations on how the entity could better meet those requirements.

Ms. Sundgrenz asked Mr. Mead how he had been involved in public education in the past. He responded that multiple of his families taught in the district or area, and he graduated from 4J. Upon graduating from college, Mr. Mead started an after-school math club program at Camas Ridge, and then worked for 4j as an educational assistant.

Ms. Newman asked how would contribute to the budget committee. Mr. Mead responded that he gained a lot of perspective into how an education could provide opportunities. He had a passion of providing education to all kids and adults and experience in analysis.

Mr. Walston asked if Mr. Mead understood ORS related to budget committees. Mr. Mead didn't have much knowledge but did understand the structure. He knew how to review laws and make sense of them.

Ms. Newman asked for Mr. Mead's priorities around schools. Mr. Mead said smaller class sizes and there appeared to be a need for more educational assistants in special education classrooms.

The board discussed the interviews beginning at 7:57 p.m.

Chair Hays explained the board would conduct a preliminary vote for the two open spots via e-mail. Chair Hays was impressed and overjoyed by quality of applicants.

Mr. Torrey liked the interview process but would have appreciated more time for applicants to answer questions. He thought questions one and three were essentially the same. Mr. Torrey liked Ms. Newman's follow up question.

Ms. Newman thought the interview process was a good first attempt. She got a greater sense of the individual, than compared to the previous, more formal process they did last year.

Ms. Nittler asked if the board would do multiple rounds of voting until they reached two people. Ms. Delf explained the process moving forward. Board members would indicate their preferred applicants via a survey online. The information would be available when they entered the board meeting on December 19, 2018. The board would take public action to select their top candidates. Ms. Walston clarified the final vote was in the regular board meeting. She was told yes.

Mr. Torrey, Ms. Newman and Ms. Delf discussed STAR versus voting by rank.

Ms. Sundgrenz thought the voting process could be more polished than last year's process. She felt awkward last year, because every person who applied was appreciated. Regardless of the outcome, she wanted all applicants to feel valued. Ms. Levis heard Ms. Sundgrenz concerns, but the only way to be polished was to have a discussion beforehand, which they couldn't do due to public meeting law.

The board continued to discussed STAR versus voting by RANK for the process on December 19, 2018. They chose to remain with the method originally planned for the regular meeting.

Ms. Newman thought in the future, the board could consider implementing STAR or voting by rank. In those methods, no one received zero votes, so the process communicated a different message. She realized the board didn't want to change how they voted that year but thought a different method could be more affirming.

The board agreed to discuss new processes further, prior to future appointments.

II. ADJOURN

Chair Hays adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

(Recorded by Marina Brassfield)

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
District Clerk

Alicia Hays
Board Chair