MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J LANE COUNTY, EUGENE, OREGON

September 16, 2020

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. and a regular session at 7 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on September 11, 2020, and published in *The Register-Guard* on September 16, 2020.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Mary Walston, Chair
Judy Newman, Vice Chair
Anne-Marie Levis
Alicia Hays
Gordon Lafer
Martina Shabram
Jim Torrey

STAFF:
Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Charis McGaughy, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Brooke Wagner, Director of K-8 Education
Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education
Kat Lange, Director of Student Services
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology Services
Jeffry Johnson, Director of K-8 Education
Andrea Belz, Director of Financial Services
Holly Langan, Director of Administrative Services
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary
Karen Hardin, Director of Human Resources

MEDIA: KRVM

I. BOARD WORK SESSION: Board Development

Chair Walston called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m. She introduced Margot Helphand, Owner of Helphand and Associates, a Eugene-area management consulting firm.

At the Board retreat the role of the Board came up during the Board self-assessment and the work on the goals for this year. Board leadership was tasked with coming back to the Board with a plan for a further conversation. Margot Helphand will facilitate that conversation. Margot is a recognized expert on School Board Governance policy and has worked with School District 4J many times in the past.

Ms. Helphand asked what the Board had done toward their goal of hiring a permanent Superintendent.

Chair Walston said later in the evening, during the Regular Session, the Board will be discussing recruitment firms, and selecting a finalist(s) for that position that the Board would eventually interview.

Vice Chair Newman said she believed the Board was on pace to hire a permanent Superintendent by spring of 2021.

Ms. Shabram stated they delegated to a smaller subcommittee and worked very closely with staff to make some of their goals possible.

Ms. Walston expressed that she would like the committee to work as a whole to have transparency among the Board.

Mr. Lafer foresaw problems with the superintendent hiring process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said it was the Board's responsibility to answer the questions surrounding this process during a global health crisis.

Ms. Newman agreed with Mr. Lafer's point.

Ms. Helphand brought up the District goal of formulating a plan for the North region up for discussion.

Ms. Levis offered that her understanding of this goal was the Board developing a plan for where schools in the North region would be placed permanently—specifically Yujin Gakuen and Kelly Middle School—making way for the new North Eugene High School location.

Ms. Walston agreed with Mr. Torrey and stated that a broader discussion is needed and that she would like to engage community partners in the future to expand the vision.

Mr. Torrey asked what the does the administration expect from the Board and what are the timelines associated with that.

Mr. Lafer wondered where does YG or Kelly middle school go. He also stated that he agrees with the idea of a health clinic but would like more info on that.

Superintendent Vandercar commented that they did a survey regarding the plan at the North region. She stated there is community groups and school groups and it's important to touch base with North Eugene teachers as well regarding the plans.

Ms. Newman stated that they need to make good on the how they spend the Bond dollars that the community supported.

Ms. Helphand summarized what she heard is that the role of the Board is to facilitate convene that they listen to community voice and use what they have heard to establish a long-term vision for the North region but as well to establish short term goals regarding the schools specifically.

Ms. Walston expressed that her aspirational goal is that they can engage the community down the road.

Ms. Hays asked if they have agreement on what is the Boards or not, for example to make decisions on who they partner with or making other decisions and in turn overriding the Superintendent. She wants clarification on what is their vote and what's not.

Ms. Helphand asked Ms. Hays what she thought is the Boards job regarding the North region.

Ms. Hays said she believed the Board should have voted on whether or not to have portable learning spaces at the Kelly Middle School site, and Mr. Lafer agreed.

Mr. Lafer said he felt the two areas the Board should have the final vote on, were the locations of Kelly Middle School, and Yujin Gakuen. He offered those were the two most urgent things, and the Board should address them first.

Ms. Shabram pointed out that the line between policy decisions and operational decisions were often blurred.

Ms. Newman stated her understanding was their role of overseeing a bond was to initiate it, create goals and visions and vote on policies.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board their thoughts on proceeding with a Kelly Middle School-Yujin Gakuen vote without having a complete picture of what would be happening in the north region.

Ms. Levis asserted the Board should be very clear with the community as to the District's visions and plans for the North region.

Mr. Torrey agreed with Ms. Levis. He stressed the importance of stakeholder involvement in the Board decision of the Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen locations, and once those decisions were made, they could be expanded upon, and specifics of the North region could be explored.

Mr. Lafer reiterated his assertion that the Board should make the final decision of the new locations for Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen.

Ms. Newman stated that their visions have to be meaningful and concrete.

Ms. Shabram stated she is struggling with the "what then?" after visions are created.

Ms. Hays stated she would like to revisit the conversation regarding the future of YG and Kelly.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board if there was consensus among them concerning their role in a vision for the North region, which uses input from the internal and external communities, but is a broad vision of what the North region should look like. She asked the Board if they saw this as their role in the North region at this time.

The Board agreed unanimously that it was.

Ms. Helphand then asked if the Board agreed that they needed to vote on where Kelly Middle School and Yujin Gakuen would be located in the North region.

Ms. Levis said she was not sure she understood exactly what she would be voting on at this time.

Mr. Torrey stated he is in support in developing a vision but would like to decide tonight on allowing the Board to vote on where YG and Kelly will be located.

Ms. Hays expressed her support on getting the vote on deciding on the future of YG & Kelly.

The Board agreed their role in the future of the North region should not only be to create the framework for the process itself and how it would move forward, but to listen and take into consideration input from the School District 4J community.

Ms. Helphand asked the Board to discuss their goal surrounding navigating COVID-19, and supporting student achievement in a changing environment of comprehensive distance learning and on-site instruction.

Mr. Torrey said that in the last few weeks, there had been a lot of public pressure surrounding School District 4J decisions about distance, and in-person learning, and why the District was taking cues from the Governor and the State Legislature, instead of making internal decisions. He asserted no one knew more than the District Administration, who dealt with the State Legislature daily during the course of their business. Mr. Torrey believed the Board should be making sure the Administration had the resources and support they needed to continue expertly navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Levis said that it was possible the Board would have to meet and vote on policy deciding exactly how the District would conduct school. She said it was the most critical to get the kids back in school as soon as possible.

Chair Walston pointed out how important the Board's budgetary decision-making was, especially during the pandemic. She also stressed the importance of equity, and how the Board's budgetary decisions could help close equity gaps—now more than ever.

Mr. Lafer agreed this goal was of the utmost importance. He said it was important for the Board to find time at its meetings to further discuss these major decisions they must make; and equally important, he offered, was setting aside times to hear from Board leadership, staff, teachers, and parents.

Ms. Hays wondered what the District plans were concerning students dropping out of District schools at a higher rate due to the COVID-driven learning challenges.

Superintendent Vandercar said much of the District's decision-making was handed down by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), but there were things that the District did have full control over, e.g. technology hubs, and daycares in the schools.

Ms. Levis thanked Ms. Helphand for the discussion as it cleared up misunderstandings and difference of opinion. She said it was important for the Board to take the time to get on the same page before making decisions, and, like Mr. Lafer, would like to find the time to do discuss the decisions that are to be made.

Chair Walston committed to having more work sessions to facilitate deeper conversations about the decisions—many of them very important and time-sensitive—the Board had to make. Ms. Shabram agreed with Ms. Levis.

Chair Walston adjourned the work session at 6:46 p.m.

II. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

III. CALL TO ORDER. ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Walston called the regular Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called the roll. She led everyone participating in the meeting in the pledge of allegiance. She then acknowledged the land on which the meeting was taking place was the Traditional Homelands of the Kalapuya People, who have been stewards of the land for approximately 14,000 years. Chair Walston also touched on Lane County being a major trading and gathering hub in the mid 19th century, and how the County went on to become the designated service area for the Confederated Tribes of: Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Cow Creek band of Umpqua Indians, during the Restoration era from 1977 – 1989.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Cydney Vandercar said she had talked with superintendents of other Lane County school districts earlier in the week. A superintendent in one district reported a large number of their students were evacuated or lost their homes in the McKenzie Fire. Another superintendent reported half of that district's employees lost their homes to the wildfire. She noted 4J faced numerous challenges in the last year but the situation could be far worse.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Walston ran down the meeting's agenda, mentioning the following items:

- Approving the agreement with Eugene Education Association (EEA) on compensation and other conditions of employment
- An update of School District 4J's return to learning plan(s)
- Consideration for approval of Board Resolution 2020-04, supporting the City of Eugene's Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE) Program
- Approving the adoption of proposed Board Policy JHH - Student Suicide Prevention
- Selecting Superintendent Search Firm Finalist(s) for Interviews

VII. ITEMS RAISED BY THE COMMUNITY

The Board acknowledged that they had read all written and submitted comments from the community, and they thanked them for their communications.

VIII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were no comments by any of the employee groups.

IX. CONSENT GROUP

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to approve the Consent Group as presented.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

X. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Update on School District 4J Return to Learning

Superintendent Vandercar noted air quality was slowly improving and said device distribution would resume soon after being delayed due to the smoky air. About 9,000 students still need to receive their devices ahead of the start of comprehensive distance learning on Monday, Sept. 21.

Ms. Vandercar said current student enrollment is about 500 students lower than last year's enrollment. She noted that much of the decline was at the elementary level, particularly in kindergarten. She anticipated some more parents would enroll their kindergarteners either when comprehensive distance learning begins on Sept. 21 or when in-person hybrid learning launches on Jan. 5, at the earliest.

District staff outlined initial plans to set up Internet hubs that will enable selected 4J students without Internet at home to participate in online learning at specific school sites for up to two hours when public health conditions allow.

Staff also outlined initial work to partner with local childcare providers to offer needed childcare for families. The district will provide gym space at four school sites, to start, and the providers will have spaces to care for up to 160 children, potentially starting as early as Sept. 28.

Mr. Lafer asked if several hundred students came back to school physically on January 1, 2021, would the District receive partial funding from the State, or would the District receive State funding based on physical attendance in October.

Ms. Belz said the State would use the District's highest enrollment year between this year and the previous year. She said the higher of the two numbers mentioned, is what the State would use to determine funding for the current year.

Ms. Shabram asked, as far as the proposed technology hubs for students, how would those students who have their own transportation to the hubs be included in a cohort of children who may have come to school together on the bus.

School District 4J Education Administrator Joyce Johnson, said it would be possible to include those kids in existing cohorts, and, in the near future, the District is looking at limited criteria for other in-person activities.

Mr. Torrey asked why Springfield was able to bring in Kindergarten and First-Graders, but School District 4J was not.

Dr. Brooke Wagner, replied the way the District had interpreted the mandates handed down from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), School District 4J wanted to reopen schools as a complete K-12 unit.

Chair Walston asked if it were true that one positive COVID-19 case in any region of the District, would mean all of the technology hubs in that region would have to close.

Superintendent Vandercar said that was correct.

Dr. Wagner said the childcare sites were under different opening requirements than the technology hubs. She continued the District was working diligently with its local partners to reach out to low-income families.

Ms. Shabram asked what the cost would be for the childcare service for the community.

Dr. Wagner said it would depend on the qualifications, sliding scales, scholarships, etc.

Mr. Lafer wondered how many childcare slots would be free, or close enough to free to be accessible to the District's low-income families. He also asked if the childcare slots were subject to the same rules and limitations as the technology hubs.

Dr. Wagner stated the childcare facilities will be under different requirements. She said they will provide more information down the road.

Ms. Newman asked what we are doing to ensure kids with IEP's are welcomed in these childcare settings.

Dr. Wagner & said they are going to service any child that signs up regardless of their academic need.

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Consider the Request from the City of Eugene for Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption

Elen Meyi-Galloway, from the City of Eugene's Planning and Development Department, offered the Board a report on School District 4J's support of the City of Eugene's Low-Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE).

The City of Eugene is requesting that the Eugene School District 4J Board adopt Resolution 2020-04 supporting the State of Oregon's and the City of Eugene's policy that allows the City to grant 20-year property tax exemptions to low income rental housing providers in Eugene (the LIRHPTE program). Pursuant to ORS 307.519(2), the 4J Board's written concurrence with the LIRHPTE program is necessary in order for the County Assessor to exempt eligible low-income rental housing providers from all property taxes.

In order to facilitate the development of affordable housing for low income Eugene residents, the Eugene City Council added Sections 2.937 – 2.940 to the Eugene Code, adopting the State's Low Income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption policy (ORS 307.515 to 307.523). The City's LIRHPTE program provides the process and approval criteria for granting 20-year property tax exemptions to eligible owners of low-income rental housing properties.

The 4J Board of Directors has previously expressed support for the LIRHPTE program. In 2009 the Chair of the 4J Board of Directors wrote a letter to the Oregon State Legislature in support of extending the enabling legislation for the program, and a resolution was passed by the Board on March 14, 2018, continuing support for this program.

When LIRHPTE tax exemptions are granted, the City and other local taxing districts forgo revenue. Pursuant to ORS 307.519(2), the tax exemption is limited to the City's tax rate, and does not exempt applicants from other property tax rates (e.g. schools, county) unless the 4J School District adopts a resolution supporting Eugene's LIRHPTE program. If the School District 4J Board adopts resolution 2020-04, eligible low-income housing providers will continue to be exempt from all property taxes. Without the full tax exemption, it is far less likely that developers will undertake development of low-income rental housing in Eugene.

The Oregon Legislature recently extended the deadline for filing low-income rental housing property tax exemption applications until July 1, 2030. On May 26, 2020, the Eugene City Council adopted an ordinance extending Eugene's LIRHPTE program in accordance with state law. Therefore, based on ORS 307.519(2), the City of Eugene is requesting that the 4J Board adopt resolution 2020-04 in support of the extension of Eugene's LIRHPTE program to allow low-income property tax exemption applications to be filed until July 1, 2030. In the past, the State Legislature has typically extended application deadlines for periods of ten years. The previous deadline was January 1, 2020.

Mr. Lafer asked what the rent limit was for different types and sizes of units. He also asked what percent of total new units built would be low-income housing, and if there was evidence suggesting the projects would not be built without the tax exemption.

Ms. Meyi-Galloway said most of the properties receiving LIRHPTE funds were 100% affordable, but they did not have to be. She continued the rent limit (which was included in the Board packet) was published by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to adopt Resolution 2020-04 in support of the LIRHPTE program, and in support of affordable rental housing in Eugene. (Resolution agreeing to the policies of providing tax exemptions for low-income rental housing properties under ORS 307.515 to 307.523 and Sections 2.937 – 2.940 of the Eugene Code, 1971.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

2. Approve OSBA Annual Membership

Ms. Delf offered the Board a report on the District renewing its membership with the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA)

The district's membership to the OSBA, its participation in the OSBA Legal Assistance Trust for the current fiscal year and its subscription to the association's web hosting services. The district relies on OSBA for policy updates after legislative sessions, web hosting of 4J board policies, information and advice, and publications and training. The total cost of the renewals is $15,118; the estimated cost of the district taking on this work well exceeds that amount.

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to renew the annual membership in the Oregon School Boards Association, OSBA's Legal Assistance Trust, and Online Policy Manual Hosting Services for 2020–21.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

3. Approve for Adoption Proposed Board Policy JHH - Student Suicide Prevention

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on the proposed Board policy JHH – Student Suicide Prevention.

Senate Bill (SB) 52, also known as Adi's Act and passed by the 2019 Legislature, directs districts to adopt a policy requiring a comprehensive plan on student suicide prevention for students in kindergarten through grade 12.

The law prescribes subjects that must be included in the suicide prevention plan, and the policy proposed mirrors those requirements. It is recommended that the Board adopt Board Policy JHH – Student Suicide Prevention as required by Oregon Revised Statute (ORS)

339.343.

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to adopt Board policy JHH – Student Suicide Prevention

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

4. Select Superintendent Search Firm Finalist(s) for Interviews

Ms. Nesbit offered the Board a report on the Superintendent search firm finalist(s), and interviews.

Ms. Nesbit announced, based on a sum of scores provided by each Board member for each of the four firms responding to the Request for Proposal (RFP), the highest-ranking firm was Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, followed by Ray & Associates, then McPherson & Jacobsen, and lastly, Carney Sandoe & Associates. Interviews were to be conducted virtually, the week of September 21, 2020.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Ms. Levis, to offer interviews to the two top-ranked firms: Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, and Ray & Associates.

MOTION: Vice Chair Newman moved, seconded by Ms. Shabram, to amend the original motion to offer interviews to the *three* top-ranked firms: Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ray & Associates, and McPherson & Jacobsen.

VOTE: The amended motion passed unanimously 5:2, with Chair Walston and Ms. Levis voting against.

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Budget Committee Appointment Process

Ms. Delf offered the Board a report on the School District 4J Budget Committee Appointment Process.

By statute, each school district in Oregon has a Budget Committee composed of the school Board and an equal number of district residents appointed by the Board. By law, Budget Committee members must reside within school district boundaries and be registered to vote; district employees are not eligible to serve on the committee.

The role of the District's Budget Committee is to hear the budget message, review the proposed budget, listen to comments from community members, then declare the tax rates and approve the budget totals to forward to the school board for adoption.

The budget committee's appointed positions have three-year terms, staggered so that approximately one-third of members' terms expire each year. There are three openings on the Budget Committee to be filled this fall: The terms of Budget Committee members Joshua Burstein, Bob Chandler and Merri Steele expired June 30, 2020. Committee members with expired terms may apply for reappointment.

The Board's established process to fill budget committee openings has been to have the District solicit applications from community members interested in serving on the committee; invite applicants to speak briefly at a school Board meeting or in more recent processes to be interviewed by the Board in a work session; indicate initial preferences via an online survey; and then act to select and appoint committee members at a following Board meeting.

Recommended Budget Committee appointment process and timeline:

• Thursday, September 17 – Openings announced
• Wednesday, October 14 – Applications due
• Screening process if a large number of applications are submitted
• Wednesday, October 21 – Board interviews candidates in work session
• Board members complete online poll to indicate initial candidate preferences
• Wednesday, November 4 – Board ballots to select three candidates (may ballot multiple times if needed to achieve majority support), then acts to appoint the selected candidates to the Budget Committee.

2. Review Board Goals

Chair Walston addressed the Board concerning its goals for the 2020-21 school year. She pointed out some of this work had been done in the Work Session before this Regular Session, but she felt they needed to formalize the language and flush the goals out a bit more.

3. Review Board Working Agreements

Chair Walston addressed the Board concerning its working agreements. She asked for, and received, the Board's consent for Board Leadership to set a date to review the Board working agreements.

XII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Vice Chair Newman expressed gratitude to Superintendent Vandercar and district staff for all their hard work always, but especially now, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Torrey said he hoped the public understood the amount of work School District 4J staff was putting in, and the tremendous pressures the staff was under to perform that work. He also asked the public to understand, with school opening back up next week, there would be mistakes made, and he asked the community to be patient.

Mr. Lafer said he was impressed with the District for their work with the Red Cross in helping families displaced by the wildfires. He said he would like to see the Board involved in more work like that in the future with the Eugene un-housed population.

Ms. Levis asked for a Moment of Silence for all the people, and all the homes and property, and everything else lost in the wildfires.

Ms. Hays echoed her thanks and sympathy for all the people that have been impacted by the fires and COVID-19.

Ms. Shabram had a special thank you for staff for scheduling technology pickups at times that were doable, and respectful and appropriate for everyone; she was especially appreciative of the scheduling made around Rosh Hashanah.

Chair Walston said she enjoyed the virtual back to school event held recently.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

(Recorded by Rodney Cimburke)

_____	_____
Cydney Vandercar	Mary Walston
District Clerk	Board Chair