

¹MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

Date: May 5, 2025

The Budget Committee of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a Budget Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website.

ROLL CALL

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric Richardson
Dakota Boulette
David Wallace
Courtney Salic
Scott Fellman
Abbie Stillie
Amy Fellows

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Maya Rabasa
Jenny Jonak
Morgan Munro
Judy Newman
Tom Di Liberto
Rick Hamilton
Ericka Thessen

STAFF:

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff
Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services
John Goldberg, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

¹ May 5, 2025 – 4J Budget Committee Meeting
Approved on: April 8, 2026

Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office
Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
Kelly McIver, Communications Director

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)

MEDIA:

KRVM

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Boulette called the Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. He said the names of all members present.

II. BUDGET COMMITTEE DELIBERATION

Chair Boulette engaged members in a deliberation concerning the Eugene School District 4J proposed budget.

Interim Superintendent Gill mentioned a document provided to the Committee detailing the latest budget proposals for reference.

Mr. Richardson acknowledged the difficult nature of making budget decisions. He recommended a budget that would recognize the voices and issues raised during public comment.

Ms. Stillie suggested combining Proposals D and F but including a \$2.7 million in reduction to the facilities reserve transfer and adjusting nutrition services programs at two sites. She said she would support Proposal A if it maintained class sizes.

Ms. Fellows said she prefers Proposal A, citing less impact on classroom staffing, Educational Assistants (EAs), and teachers.

Mr. Fellman shared his perspective that while concerns raised in public comment are critically important, the district is looking at a financial reality that is dismal. He cited a state budget made up of 30% federal funds. He voiced support for Proposal D.

Ms. Jonak said she prefers Proposal A along with accounting for declining enrollment, stating that she wants to keep direct services in place.

Mr. Fellman cautioned against a budget that could cause a worse scenario next year. He suggested making moderate impacts this year and the following three years instead of making minimal cuts this year and significant cuts in the following years.

Interim Superintendent Gill encouraged the Committee to engage in the budget process early next year to slowly develop a plan designed to do the least amount of harm possible.

Mr. Di Liberto noted a difference in the school environment from last year following changes made in the district. He said he does not want to lose any momentum and is leaning toward Proposal A.

Ms. Newman raised the topic of spending down reserves and potentially lowering the reserve rate. She cautioned against spending down reserves too abruptly. She would like more clarity around which proposals prioritize critical positions.

At Mr. Fellman's request, Interim Superintendent Gill detailed components of Proposal D plus F.

Ms. Jonak pointed out that other factors, including a potential sale of the Wells Fargo building, could mitigate the impact of current budget decisions.

At Ms. Rabasa's request, Interim Superintendent Gill clarified components of Proposal A.

Ms. Rabasa suggested a slow and steady approach to budget cuts. She is leaning towards Proposal A with the addition of maintaining class sizes.

At Ms. Salic's request, Interim Superintendent Gill provided distinctions between Proposal D plus F and Proposal A.

Regarding Proposal D plus F, Mr. Wallace asked how sustainable the proposed maintenance cuts are.

Mr. Brown responded that the reduction in transfers from the maintenance department is a one-time reduction. He said the impact is that there will be less funds available in the future for capital projects that are outside of the bond – such as boiler, roof, or car replacements.

Ms. Newman asked if funds from a future potential sale of the Wells Fargo building be used for facilities.

Mr. Brown said that when the district previously sold property, the money went into a property sales fund. However, the Wells Fargo building funds could go back into the general fund because that was the fund used to purchase the building.

At Mr. Di Liberto's request, Mr. Brown provided further clarification of Proposal D, specifically regarding maintaining class sizes.

At Ms. Salic's request, Interim Superintendent Gill provided further distinctions between Proposal D and Proposal D plus F.

Ms. Newman asked for clarification about nutrition services proposals, specifically that nutrition programs at Fox Hollow and Family School would prepare food off-site.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that the sites would have the same meals and still meet the needs of students (concerning allergies, etc.). He explained that the nutrition department may consider preparing meals off site regardless of the Committee's decision, citing low enrollment.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to how much the projected budget estimates might fluctuate.

Interim Superintendent Gill said all the projections are built off a number of assumptions, including approval of the governor's proposed budget. They do not include assumptions such as the special education cap or high cost disability fund bills passing, nor the sale of the Wells Fargo building. He mentioned enrollment projections also having a potential effect. He estimated that the budget estimates could easily fluctuate \$5 million in either direction.

Ms. Munro pointed out that Proposals A, D, and D and F all put back recurring costs and rely on one-time savings, which she said is problematic.

Ms. Newman asked what kind of impact changes to the high cost disability fund might have on the district. She asked if there is an associated dollar amount.

Ms. Lange responded that the district received less funds this school year from the high cost disability fund, even though there were more students. She estimated that the district receives less than \$1 million dollars.

Interim Superintendent Gill added that if the legislature passes the bills, but does not fund the additional dollars, 4J would get a smaller slice of the pie because there are districts with a greater percentage of students with special needs.

Chair Boulette raised the topic of district efforts to increase enrollment.

Ms. Jonak responded that the best way to maintain enrollment is by continuing to provide services and keep students supported. She suggested that if cuts are more extreme than anticipated, it might have the opposite impact. She provided an example of disabled students feeling pushed out.

In closing, the Committee discussed the process for voting on a budget proposal.

III. BUDGET TAX RATE APPROVAL

MOTION: Mr. Fellman moved to declare the tax rate and debt service levy for the general fund tax rate 4.7485 per \$1,000 assessed valuation of the district; and for the local option levy tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of the district; and for the debt service fund tax levy of \$37,560,172. Seconded by Ms. Munro. **The motion passed unanimously, 14:0:0; Chair Boulette, Vice Chair Richardson, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak,**

Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor.

IV. BUDGET APPROVAL

Following a short break, Mr. Brown presented Proposal H – representative of Committee discussion – for review.

Proposal H

- Proposed budget reductions (Levels 1 through 4)
- Adds back 7.0 Licensed FTE in Elementary Schools
- Adds back 3.0 Licensed FTE in Middle Schools
- Adds back 6.0 Licensed FTE in High Schools
- Adds back 1.0 FTE of Library Services across the district
- Adds back 4.5 Classified FTE across the district
- Adds back 6.3 Classified FTE in High Schools

MOTION: Mr. Fellman moved to approve the budget total for all funds, including the general fund total of \$298,389,000 and other funds total of \$262,597,917. Seconded by Ms. Jonak. **The motion passed, 11:3:0; Vice Chair Richardson, Mr. Fellman, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Salic, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Rabasa all voting in favor. Chair Boulette, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro voting against.**

MOTION: Ms. Stillie moved to recommend Proposal H to the Board of Directors and recommend that they use the upcoming year to plan for next year's budget process; continue to focus on those with special needs and positions that stabilize classrooms; apply the Budget Values Framework uniformly across staff including exempts; provide education around what exempt staff do for the district; and consider positions funded outside the general fund, including Family Resource Coordinators, Title programs, elementary Educational Assistants (EAs), high school Student Support Coordinators, Early Literacy and Walk to Read, library staff, MTSS Specialists, and SPED Teacher Mentors. Seconded by Ms. Salic. **The motion passed, 11:3:0; Chair Boulette, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Fellows, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Salic, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Rabasa, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Newman all voting in favor. Vice Chair Richardson, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Wallace voting against.**

V. ADJOURN

Chair Boulette adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.