

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors- Special Session
Tuesday, December 12, 2006 – 6:00 p.m.
Sam Case Elementary
Newport, Oregon

PRESIDING: Sue Ryan, Chairman

Present: Sue Ryan, Chairman; Brenda Brown, Vice-Chairman; Ron Beck, Jean Turner, Directors

Also Present: Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary; Zone 4 Candidates Karen Gerttula and Jana Cowan

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Ryan convened the meeting and called the session to order at 6:02 p.m. with a quorum of all four board members present.

Board Interviews, Zone 4

Board Chair Sue Ryan welcomed the group and noted the session's purpose of interviewing candidates for Zone 4 of the LCSD Board of Directors. Superintendent Rinearson drew a lot; Karen Gerttula was selected for the first interview.

The Board asked each candidate a series of prepared questions, as follows:

1. What do you view as the role of a school board member?
2. What previous experiences have you had which might be helpful to you as a school board member?
3. How do you feel the board should respond to angry people at board meetings?
4. Explain your knowledge of the manner in which schools are funded in Oregon.
5. What skills or strengths do you feel you would add to the current Lincoln County School District board?
6. LCSD encompasses more than four distinct communities. Do you think schools should deliver the same curriculum in the same manner in all areas, or should each area be able to choose the manner in which the information is presented?
7. Please explain your understanding of the time commitment for this position.

A summary of Ms. Gerttula's responses follows.

1. Ms. Gerttula noted the board serves as a policy making body, as well as a liaison between the district and its schools.
2. She reported her extensive governmental experience, including the Toledo Planning Commission, Toledo City Council and county commissioner. She said she is a teacher by training, and still holds a valid substitute teaching license.
3. The Board should respond in the same manner to an angry person as any other person. "You should listen with respect, and answer if possible."

4. Schools are funded with great complexity, through the state. "It is a complex formula, per student, with local funds as well." She noted the current concern with federal timber dollars, and added that grant funds comprise part of the district's revenue.
5. Ms. Gerttula noted her vast experience as a board member "with a variety of folks" over the years. "I understand you have to function as a team member, with no agendas (which I have none). I've worked here in Lincoln County for 34 years and have a good understanding of how things work here."
6. She stated her belief that the district should provide the best overall education, though not necessarily the same in each community. "We can transport students from one community to another. Flexibility is important; we cannot have what everyone wants in every building."
7. Ms. Gerttula said the board was considering having one formal meeting per month, with work sessions as needed. She stated her belief that her retirement status would allow her sufficient time to perform duties of a board member.

Following the formal questions, Director Turner said the time commitment was larger than the formal meetings each month, and "bigger than I thought when I came on."

Vice-Chairman Brown asked the candidate if she had questions of the Board; she did not. Director Beck asked about her substitute teaching license (as a board member may not be an employee of the district). Ms. Gerttula said she had not used the license in 15 years.

Chairman Ryan said the Board occasionally meets during the day or on Saturday.

A summary of Ms. Cowan's responses follows.

1. Ms. Cowan said she views the Board as a "team of reasonable people that work together to provide a framework as given us by the state." She said the Board sets goals and should seek perpetual improvement on what is in place. She also said there should be accountability for all people involved, including the students.
2. She noted her background as a medical professional, and said problem solving is similar in different settings. One should take the information and view it with a critical eye and objectivity. "Sometimes you have to make decisions you would rather not make." She said she is currently on various committees, including Habitat for Humanity, works well with people, and is honest.
3. Ms. Cowan said the Board should listen to angry people at board meetings. "Many times people are frustrated, as they feel their point of view is seen as not valid." She noted the need to try to diffuse the situation early, and to listen to try to come up with solutions.
4. She noted the complexity of school funding in Oregon, and said it changed in 1991 when Measure 5 was approved. At that point, responsibility for school funding went from local to state control; the state has a formula for school funding. "In good times, funding from the state is adequate, but in other times it is not." She noted the charter schools in Eddyville and Siletz, and said there is an effort in Toledo to secede from the district. "Even with the governor's proposed budget, we may not even be able to maintain what we have now," said Cowan.
5. Ms. Cowan said "it is obvious I cannot compete with Karen's longevity. I can bring fresh eyes

and a new perspective.” She said her four-year-old son will be entering school next fall, and her grown daughter attended Newport High. “There are problems, but also great potential in the district,” said Cowan.

6. There needs to be a minimum content throughout the district, however, each school/community is different. Students and teachers have accountability, and they have a voice. The student’s voice is a key element, said Cowan.
7. She said the Board was considering going to one business meeting per month, with one or two work sessions as needed. “I realize there can be additional commitments. We attend many school functions as a family; I don’t view those things as a commitment, but something you do as part of a community.”

Director Beck said he’d had difficulty at times differentiating between being a parent and a board member at school functions and asked Ms. Cowan if she had considered this. She responded she had, and said one of her strengths is objectivity, “not just jumping in with emotion. Not just my son, but all children should have a good education.” She said the questions the candidates were sent initiated a great deal of thought. She expressed her belief it would be beneficial to have someone on the Board with ties to the elementary school.

Board members then shared their opinions regarding the candidates. Director Turner said “This is a wonderfully difficult decision.” She noted Ms. Gerttula’s extensive background and decision making prowess, but added her leaning was toward Ms. Cowan, as the parent of a young child. “I think we need that element on the Board, as the rest of us do not have that any more.”

Director Beck said both candidates brought excellent skills to the Board, and said he was still deciding. He thanked both candidates for their applications.

Director Brown noted her familiarity with both candidates, and said she is “thrilled” they both applied. She expressed her support of Ms. Gerttula, though both candidates bring passion to the Board.

Chairman Ryan said the choice between the two was difficult, as both candidates are excellent. “I am impressed with your answers,” she said. She said she was leaning toward Ms. Cowan, with her fresh perspective, though either candidate would be excellent.

Appointment of Jana Cowan to Zone 4, LCSD Board of Directors

Motion 06/07-28

On motion of Director Beck, seconded by Director Turner, the Board unanimously approved Jana Cowan as the Zone 4 representative to the LCSD Board of Directors for the December 12, 2006 through June 30, 2007 time period.

Chairman Ryan administered the oath of office to Ms. Cowan.

The meeting was recessed to regular session at 6:58 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent