

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors- Special Session
Tuesday, September 29, 2009- 6:30 p.m.
Newport High School
Newport, Oregon

Minutes

PRESIDING: Jana Cowan, Chairman

Present: Jana Cowan, Chairman; Ron Beck, Vice-Chairman; Jean Turner, Brenda Brown, Directors

Also Present: Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary; approx. 5 members of the staff, media and interested patrons

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Cowan convened the meeting and called the session to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of four board members present.

Board Interviews, Zone 1

Board members introduced themselves to the two candidates for Zone 1 (Karen Bondley and Intz Walker). Chairman Jana Cowan explained the same questions would be asked of both candidates. The prepared questions were shared with the candidates prior to the meeting.

Director Turner began with the first question: **“What do you view as the role of a school board member?”** Intz Walker noted board members: work on a team; establish direction; work with the Superintendent and administrators; deal with budget, curriculum, personnel, establish policies/procedures in accordance with state law; have a role to share information about the district with the community; and celebrate student successes.

Karen Bondley responded that board members represent a particular community, and said she has lived in Lincoln City for 18 years. She said school boards attend to policies, contracts, budget and union issues, and noted the most important thing is to be out in the community and provide the best education for our students.

Director Brown posed the next question: **“What previous experiences have you had which might be helpful to you as a school board member?”** Ms. Bondley noted she has not served on a school board, but currently serves on two councils. She facilitates two health career clubs, one at Taft High and one at Toledo High. “I feel I have a good understanding of students and teachers and their issues.” She commented it is a pleasure serving in the schools. (Director Brown asked if she saw any conflict between administering the health career clubs and serving on the school board; she responded the clubs are financially supported by OHSU).

Ms. Walker reported she worked in the district for eight years and has retired. She has been a school counselor, an alternative education teacher and a school librarian in the past, and has set up boards for counseling and non-profits. She also noted she has written grants. "I am an active supporter of good education, and I have always wanted to work to improve education. I love kids and teachers and this area." Director Beck asked if she is compensated in any way by LCSD; she replied she is not.

Vice Chairman Beck asked question three: "**How do you feel the board should respond to angry people at board meetings?**" Ms. Walker responded that one needs to be very tolerant and search out what their problem really is, saying the Board will look into it in whatever appropriate way is used. Chairman Cowan asked how she would deal with angry board members; Ms. Walker said she would respond similarly. "I try not to return anger, but try to understand what is underneath," said Walker.

Ms. Bondley reported she has worked as a community facilitator in the health care field for 22 years, which is also a hot topic. "You have to break down the message you are receiving into two things: emotion and message. The emotion comes from them caring deeply about the subject; you need to listen for the message."

Chairman Cowan asked question four: "**Explain your knowledge of the manner in which schools are funded in Oregon.**" Ms. Bondley noted they are not funded adequately. She said her knowledge on this issue is limited, but that she understands funding for public schools comes from property taxes, state funding and federal and other grants,

Ms. Walker said her knowledge on this topic is similar, and said that 60% of school funding comes from a state fund, 30% from property tax, and the rest from the other sources mentioned by Ms. Bondley. (Note: approximately 62% of funding comes from property taxes, 28% from state funds, and 10% from other sources).

Director Turner asked the fifth question: "**What skills or strengths do you feel would add to the current Lincoln County School District board?**" Ms. Walker noted she has worked at two schools in the district and has an idea of the differences between them. "I have experience with budgets, counseling centers and libraries, and I've worked with students for 40 years." She said she knows kids, teachers and administrators, and has sensitivity to all of their needs. She added that her writing skills are good, she is computer oriented, and was a test coordinator.

Ms. Bondley reported she has a good knowledge of the community she would represent as she has lived there 18 years. She noted her familiarity with schools, kids and teachers, and said she loves both Taft and Toledo. "I am an outreach worker, so I have connections to the community. I do budget work around health care, and also write grants." She reiterated that community connection is her greatest strength, and said she works with the Chamber of Commerce to share information about health care.

Director Brown posed question six: "**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?**" Karen Bondley said that if there is a choice, it would be good to make the curriculum as individual as possible. "But I also know you have standardized tests, so there is probably a limit to individual things you can do," added Bondley.

Ms. Walker noted her strong feelings on this issue, and said she believes we need different curriculum that works in different ways at different schools. She noted that standards are “the most important thing” that should be re-evaluated every couple of years, and said she is pleased the district has moved in the direction of giving more autonomy to schools.

Mr. Beck asked question seven: **“Please explain your understanding of the time commitment for this position.”** Ms. Walker said she realizes the time commitment is likely more than one would think, and said she understands there is one regularly scheduled meeting per month, but several more may occur (for budget, work sessions, etc.).

Ms. Bondley said her response would be about the same, and said she understands board members meet with Tom monthly. “I am supposing you have prep time before each board meeting,” she added.

Director Turner asked both to explain how they feel about visiting schools (added question). Ms. Bondley responded she is in favor of visiting schools, as it would provide understanding of schools and their activities. She noted it would be important to let the principal know she is a board member, and said she would hope visiting as a board member would not hurt her position as a health care advocate. Director Cowan asked if it would be hard for her to differentiate between that role and the one as a Board member. Ms. Bondley responded it would depend upon the question asked, and said she would clarify her role to the asker.

Ms. Walker said she would not have a similar conflict as she is not employed. She stated she would introduce herself to the principal and talk with administrators and students. Chairman Cowan asked what she would do if posed a school district question while at Fred Meyer. Ms. Walker stated one could “keep it short, listen for a few minutes and move on.”

Chairman Cowan asked the two candidates what inspired them to run for the board position (added question). Ms. Walker responded that she has always loved school, and has been in schools for most of her life. “I love working to make education as good as possible to make students’ dreams come true, and have always wanted to serve on a school board,” said Walker.

Ms. Bondley said she enjoyed a “wonderful public education in Oregon,” and said her mother was a PTA president. She said she has worked with students a great deal in her career, and echoed Ms. Walker’s thought of always wanting to serve on a school board. “I would also like to expand my horizons, as I have been in health care for 22 years,” said Bondley.

Director Brown expressed her pleasure with having two very qualified candidates, and said it would be a difficult decision. “Both of you have things to add to our Board,” said Brown.

Vice Chairman Beck agreed, and said serving on the Board is especially rewarding on graduation day.

Ms. Cowan then asked how they would handle the frustration of losing programs and people due to budget reductions (added question). Ms. Walker noted this has been a problem for many years, and said it has been a constant process of creating the best possible education for kids with “what you have.” She said she could be helpful during these difficult financial times as she “knows some of the things that have to go on.”

Ms. Bondley stated that although these are difficult times for schools, “in the end you have to make the best decision you can that comes from your heart.” She added that sometimes opportunities exist that may not have been seen but for the hard times. “They may be hard to see, but may change the way things go” into a more positive direction, said Bondley. “There are opportunities if you look for them.”

Vice Chairman Beck said the Board has one employee (the Superintendent) and **asked how the candidates see the Board’s relationship with the Superintendent** (added question). Ms. Bondley responded she does not have extensive knowledge of unions, and said the relationship between the Board and Superintendent is to provide support and guidance, and to develop consensus between the Superintendent and the Board.

Ms. Walker stated she sees the Board as support to the Superintendent and vice versa. “He finds facts about the four areas of the district and shares that with the Board.” It is the Board’s job at that point to write or adapt a policy to deal with those facts. “You have to look at the laws; it is a team effort to support the District,” said Walker.

Director Turner noted LCSD has four areas and four regular high schools, but also has several alternative programs including four charter schools. **“You have described how each community is distinct, but how do you feel about the other kinds of programs we have?”** (added question). Ms. Walker replied that “They are wonderful. The more we have, the more we will touch or move our students forward.” She added that it is important to help students understand they can go on and achieve.

Ms. Bondley agreed, saying the District needs to “meet the needs of all students.” She said charter schools are interesting and provide ways to try new things.

Chairman Cowan asked **as a representative of Zone 1, how do you see your role on the Board when it comes to making decisions?** (added question) Mr. Beck explained that, though representing a particular zone, board members are elected at large so represent all of the voters of the county. Ms. Walker responded that a board member must consider both the area one represents as well as the entire district. “You have to look at the big picture and the small picture.”

Karen Bondley said a board member is asked to represent a community, but cannot make decisions to the detriment of other areas. “You have to have balance,” said Bondley.

Vice Chairman Beck noted that **charter schools draw from all over the district, and asked how the candidates felt about that** (added question). Ms. Bondley responded that you cannot refuse to move forward with new ideas. “I wouldn’t want to see improvement not happen due to reduced enrollment in certain schools.”

Ms. Walker said charter schools must be monitored to ensure they are complying with the tenets of the charter, and to make sure they are successfully meeting test requirements. She expressed her support of an automotive program, saying many students “love that.”

Chairman Cowan asked each of the candidates to rank subjects like art, music and TAG (Talented and Gifted) (added question). Ms. Bondley said she would hate for any of those programs to

be cut, but reiterated there may be opportunities in reductions. “There may be ways of doing things outside the regular way,” said Bondley.

Ms. Walker said she has experienced cuts to all of the programs mentioned by Ms. Cowan, and said one solution may be to explore other funding sources. “I think industrial arts may be even more important than TAG, as the upper end kids have involved parents that help them get to where they need to go,” said Walker.

Approval of Karen Bondley as Zone 1 Representative

Motion 09/10-16

On motion of Director Turner, seconded by Director Brown, the Board unanimously approved Karen Bondley as the Zone 1 representative to the LCSD Board of Directors for the September 29, 2009 through June 30, 2011 time period.

After making the motion, Director Turner said “Both of you are wonderful,” and said it was a difficult decision for her. “I am leaning toward Karen because of her community outreach experience,” said Turner. Director Brown agreed that both women would be an asset to the District, and said she too is a believer in communication and community outreach.

Vice Chairman Beck said he heard many things during the interviews that struck chords with him, and said he supports the nomination. He thanked both women for taking the time to apply.

Chairman Cowan thanked Mss. Bondley and Walker, saying it was a difficult decision and both would have been great. After the vote, she administered the oath of office to Karen Bondley.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent