

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors- Work Session
Wednesday, October 26, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Newport Middle School
Newport, Oregon

Minutes

PRESIDING: Ron Beck, Chairman

Present: Ron Beck, Chairman; Amanda Remund, Vice Chairman; Liz Martin, Karen Bondley, Kelley Ellis, Directors

Also Present: Steve Boynton, Superintendent; Susan Van Liew, Director of Elementary and Special Education; Michael Morgan, Director of Human Resources; Rich Belloni, Director of Support Services; Laurie Urquhart, Secretary

Handouts: Dollar General/LCSD Quitclaim Deed; Every Child, Every Day Focus Areas and Initiatives; Waarvick & Waarvick Letter and Quitclaim Deed; Organizational Flowchart 2016/17

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Beck convened the meeting and called the session to order at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum of four board members present. Director Ellis arrived at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Waldport Open Space, Memo of Understanding

Superintendent Boynton noted the property being discussed is the old Waldport High property, which has been in transit the last few years. The District and the City of Waldport had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the property which was extended once and which expired October 10, 2016. The goal of the MOU was to, at some point, convey the property to the City of Waldport. (The District received a FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant several years ago that paid for the demolition and removal of the school, which was located in a tsunami inundation zone).

The property must be dedicated and maintained in perpetuity as open space for the conservation of natural floodplain (tsunami inundation zone). The district hopes at some point to convey the property to the City of Waldport. To date, the City and the District have not come to terms on how the property can/will be used. The FEMA grant delineates certain responsibilities for the property.

Negotiations with the City will continue. For the time being, the District will maintain the property.

Construction Excise Tax- Per Cent of Increase

The construction excise tax was enacted by the state legislature several years ago to provide revenue for school districts to build facilities. The law allows school districts to increase the rate of assessment of the tax each year; LCSD has not yet done so. Currently the district receives \$1.00 per square foot of new residential property and \$.50 per square foot for commercial property. The rate could be raised by as much as 27 cents by law.

Director of Support Services Rich Belloni asked the Board to consider the rate and whether the district should increase it. Approximately \$175,000 to \$200,000 per year is currently generated for the district. Board members reached consensus that they would like the rate to increase incrementally; Chairman Beck suggested starting at \$1.10 then increasing it by 5% annually. Superintendent Boynton and Directors Belloni and Baldwin will develop a recommendation and present it to the board at a future meeting.

Quitclaim Deed- Waldport Property

Over the summer, the district received communication from a law firm in Florida representing a real estate purchaser interested in property in Waldport. The 1911 title to this property granted to LCSD a right of reverter if the premises are ever used for the vending or sale of liquor. The purchaser would like to build a Dollar General, which sells alcohol.

The attorney representing the district communicated with the law firm in Florida, who developed a quitclaim deed relinquishing all right, title and interest in the property (located in a tsunami zone). The district does not own the property; the district would have to pursue legal action to enact the reverter clause.

The board indicated its willingness for district administrators to sign the quitclaim deed, unless it is learned the board must sign it.

Direction of the District

Chairman Beck referenced an organizational chart showing the current structure of the district. He asked the board to consider this structure, given the philosophy of “Every Child, Every Day” as well as the Board’s goal of students performing at or above the state average by 2018. Mr. Beck queried “Do we have the right people in place to make this happen? Are we going the right way?”

Superintendent Boynton distributed a list of “Focus Areas and Initiatives” currently taking place in the district, and said the district made substantial gains over the past two years. He said there are questions about how to keep this momentum going, given the way the district is structured. “The current system is built on the idea that you will have a stable teacher workforce, but we are replacing about 20% of our teachers every year,” said Boynton. He added that the district is seeing many more alternatively licensed teachers as well.

Mr. Boynton noted that “Daily Five” (literacy framework) and “Balanced Math” (math instructional program) take teachers years of practice to be most effective. He said district administration is trying to find better ways to support teachers during these training years. The district has a mentor grant, but it is geared toward different things. He said it is also difficult to provide enough support to experienced teachers as well as they are located in disparate parts of the district.

Several of the initiatives were “organically grown,” in that they were suggested by teachers (e.g., Spalding, Compass). Superintendent Boynton introduced STAR as a method to gather data. CTE/PTE (Career Technical Education/Professional Technical Education) courses are being increased to address those students who may not be geared toward college. A business program will likely be added.

The Superintendent noted the elementary principals have become much more aligned since Susan Van Liew became Director of Elementary Education (and Special Education).

Chairman Beck referenced the board goal of students exceeding the state average by 2018, and wondered about math sequencing. “Some students finish their math requirements, then don’t take math for a couple of years. We can say there is a four-year math requirement, but we’d have to fund that. What can the Board do?”

Superintendent Boynton responded there is a high likelihood that math teachers will recommend a change in the graduation requirements, which could mean additional math teachers. “We do a good job at computational math, but need more time with math that is applicable in the real world,” said Boynton. He mentioned a new math course (Math 68) that is geared toward students who are more technical bound. Changes to math sequencing could mean an additional math teacher at every high school. “We may need to have traveling teachers, which could happen at the elementary level too.”

Chairman Beck asked what the district office (D.O.) would look like to accomplish this. Mr. Boynton stated he does not yet know, and asked that it be referred to as ‘central structure’ rather than D.O. He said one of the four areas of the district met the board goal, one is close, and two are not close. “We are thin in providing supports. It will take a team to figure this out,” said Boynton.

Chairman Beck noted there are many areas the board could discuss on the topic at hand, including a succession list. The Superintendent noted legislative changes could hasten retirements.

Director Martin agreed with changing the terminology to central structure. She recollected changes made when Mr. Boynton became Superintendent, and asked how those changes are working. She said she would have appreciated Eric Clendenin’s (Director of Secondary Education) input. “Are the changes working? What would we like to see be done differently?”

Superintendent Boynton said many duties were given to principals from the former Student Services Administrator position; “maybe that was a mistake,” said Boynton. He added that the position held by Betsy Wilcox is comprised of several complex areas (Title programs, Curriculum/Instruction, Mentors, Inquiry model, etc.). “It is completely unreasonable that we can expect she could do all of them well,” said Boynton. “And you don’t usually see someone like Susan Van Liew, who is both Director of Elementary Education and Director of Special Education.”

Mr. Beck said that social media communication was pushed out to schools, and asked if “we are happy with that model. We used to have a position that did all of that.” Superintendent Boynton said that the district may bring back a Communications person in some capacity. “We don’t tell our story very well, but the role of this position needs to be further defined.” He added that the mobile apps at schools was spearheaded by Mr. Clendenin.

Chairman Beck noted the district website is good, but wondered how many people use it. “I am not expecting answers tonight, just raising questions.”

With regard to standardized testing, Mr. Beck asked if the district is examining vehicles other than the ACT. Mr. Boynton said the State appears to be leaning toward the SAT, but is “considering having three things you could use, including the ACT.” Aspire (the test leading toward the ACT) can be taken all the way down to fifth grade.

Director Martin stated her belief that communication going to the public is lacking. “I want people to hear about the wonderful things happening in our schools. I want to share the success stories. This will build our identity again and highlight the talent we have here. I feel we have taken three or four steps back, without that position.”

Director Ellis noted that there are likely many staff members skilled in this area who could send short summaries out to the media or to a central person to send. “There does need to be some control,” said Ellis. She thanked Director of Human Resources Michael Morgan for assuming the role of spokesperson for the district in many instances. Superintendent Boynton stated staff is looking at one area in the district for class size, but expects some sort of Communications position may be posted after the first of the year. Beyond this position, there may be another person to oversee the restructure being developed.

Director Martin stated the Communications person was vital during the bond measure effort.

Superintendent Boynton noted a frustration in another area. “We have one of the best Balanced Math trainers in the country, but she has to run her own building. Maybe that person should be a trainer, centrally. And maybe a similar position in English/Language Arts. Then the C&I person would oversee both. Maybe we would have Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) by area.”

Director Martin said she is looking to the Superintendent for leadership in this area. “I see there is a need. What direction do you see?”

Superintendent Boynton said he wanted to ensure the board is still committed to the initiatives. “Then we will have to sit together as the Learning Support Team and with principals. Maybe we won’t push as much to buildings. And much of this depends on what happens with the legislature. I won’t increase class size to increase the central structure.”

Chairman Beck said there needs to be balance between central structure and the buildings. “I want to build successful programs, not just the newest, brightest thing.” He then raised the topic of parental engagement. Mr. Boynton said all buildings are reaching out to parents, but “we see the same faces.” He noted he would like to engage parents in the learning process, both at home and at school, and suggested sending parents home with a toolbox. “I want to interact with those parents with whom we are not currently.”

Board members expressed a desire to engage community members with no children in school, and grandparents—especially grandparents raising grandchildren.

Director Ellis stated Mr. Boynton mentioned different tracks students could pursue (college, trade school, etc.) and said it would be beneficial for students to select which track they would like to pursue.

Board/Superintendent Working Agreements

Chairman Beck noted the agreements had been under review by the board for some time, and said he would like to see them adopted in the near future. He urged board members to forward any suggestions to him. “If you don’t want to change them, please let me know that too.”

Future ESD Services

The Superintendent provided ESD history to the board, explaining that many years ago, the district served as its own ESD. Legislature was passed directing districts to select an ESD to join, and LCSD joined the Linn-Benton ESD to become Linn-Benton-Lincoln. The idea is for the provision of services regionally, to take advantage of economies of scale. The ESD now provides Special Education services and some software services (e.g., BIS, SIS and Tie Net). The district provides much of its own Technology services.

The funding is divided into two Tiers. Tier I services are those districts pay for, whether they use them or not. Tier II services are independent. The Superintendent said we do not take advantage of many of the Tier I services, mostly due to geography, but also due to differing aims.

Mr. Boynton asked staff to examine the amount of money the district would receive if it were not part of the ESD. He shared his concerns with the ESD and other member superintendents that our district was contributing more than it is receiving. All superintendents in the ESD agreed to a one-year (rather than two year) local service plan to see if there is a better way to provide more equitable services. “Hopefully we can come to a new arrangement with more flexibility,” said Boynton. The Superintendent said it could mean as much as \$500,000 in unclaimed resources (if the district were to opt out of the ESD). “But could we find the people to do those jobs?”

He noted he is not looking at opting out at this time, but rather working with the other superintendents to correct the system. He expressed optimism that this could occur.

Summary

Mr. Boynton said he felt the board was asking him to work with staff to develop a plan to move the district forward that he would present to the board in February or March. Director Martin asked the Superintendent to assure her that every level would be brought into the conversation; Mr. Boynton agreed.

The meeting was adjourned 7:58 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent