

Brookins Leaving Vernonia School District After 20 Years

Vernonia School District Administrator James Brookins has accepted a position as the new Superintendent/Principal at the Blachly School District beginning July 1st. The Vernonia School Board accepted his resignation at their June 13, 2013 meeting.

Brookins has been part of the Vernonia School District and the community for the past twenty years. He has served as a teacher and a coach at the high school level, as an administrator, and most recently as the director of the special education program.

"I am leaving Vernonia because this is a wonderful opportunity," said Brookins in an interview on the day his resignation was accepted. "I have a limited number of years left in education and my advancement here in Vernonia, though possible, was not guaranteed. The school district in Blachly is very high achieving and they were interested in me; I was their first choice. I am a small school guy and I didn't look for work at bigger schools, I only looked for opportunities that were even smaller than our district because I think those are the places that an individual can make a significant impact as a school leader."

Blachly District #90 is located in the Coast Range, thirty-three miles northwest of Eugene in Lane County. The Triangle Lake Charter School, a K-12 school of 220 students,

is the only school in the district. The community is located three miles from the 293 acre Triangle Lake.

Brookins grew up in North Bend, Oregon and graduated from North Bend High in



1977 as a National Merit and Oregon Scholar. During high school he was an American Field Service exchange student in Kempton Park, South Africa. He matriculated in South Africa in 1976 with distinctions in mathematics and science. After high school Brookins played varsity tennis while spending two years at Southwestern Oregon Community College. He transferred to Oregon State and graduated in 1981 with a B.S. in Biology. Brookins returned to OSU as a graduate teaching assistant in 1986, changed his major to education, and gained initial teaching certification in biology, chemistry and advanced mathematics in 1990. He received his standard teaching certificate in biology from Portland State in 1997. He began studying admin-

istration at Concordia University in 2004 and obtained his M.Ed. and initial and continuing administrative licenses from CU. He is currently a doctoral student at Concordia with a projected graduation date of August 2015.

Brookins started with the Vernonia School District in 1993 and taught all levels of mathematics, chemistry, physics and leadership. During his teaching career he was head coach of the cross country, wrestling and golf teams. He was an advisor for the student government, the International Club, the National Honor Society, and a mentor for the FIRST Robotics program. For the past several years he served as Vernonia's special education director, the testing coordinator, and served on the facilities committee as Vernonia built their new school complex. He assisted the Superintendent and the two Principals as necessary with all areas of building management and administration.

"I have loved my years in Vernonia," says Brookins. "This has been an absolutely great place to work and raise kids. We obviously have the best K-12 complex in the country. There are all kinds of good things happening in Vernonia. But there are also some struggles with declining enrollment and the funding problems that it creates. Vernonia is always going to be the place that I learned to

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School Board Approves Budget, Authorizes Interim Funding

The Vernonia School Board had a busy evening at their regular meeting on June 13, 2013. The School Board adopted the 2013-14 Budget and also adopted the calendar for the upcoming school year. The budget was balanced in part with the reduction of ten days from the calendar for a total of 155 student school days and total contract days for staff of 170. During the Budget Hearing, Kathi Fetch, President of Oregon School Employees Association Chapter 67, spoke during the public comment portion and expressed concerns as a parent over the 155 day student calendar. As an employee, she noted that classified employees have lost a total of twenty-two work days over the past five years. Juliet Safer, President of the Vernonia Education Association, asked that the School Board develop a clear plan for how any additional funds that could come from the state or other sources would be spent, including reintroducing school days into the calendar.

In other action the School Board authorized the District to borrow up to \$1.225 million dollars in additional interim financing from two sources, Wedbush Bank and the Oregon Department of

Energy Small Scale Energy Loan Program (SELP), for the school construction project. In a written report to the Board, Superintendent Ken Cox informed the Board that additional funding was needed to balance the books for the current fiscal year for the demolition work at the old school site that has already been completed. Cox explained that the District is working with Oregon Department of Energy to obtain the remainder of the \$2 million "Cool Schools" loan that the District qualified for last year. The District is also working with Wedbush Bank to rollover the \$2.05 million in funding which matures on June 28, 2013, that the District still owes due to a shortfall in the Facilities Grant the District received in March. Cox says that some of the new funding the District will borrow could be paid back next year with funds left from the demolition project.

The School Board also briefly met in Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(d) Negotiations, before reconvening in their regular meeting and voting to ratify the 2013-16 classified employees contract with the Oregon State Employees Association.

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City to Make Sewer Rate Adjustments

City Council voted on June 17th to adopt the Wastewater Rate Study, prepared for the City by FCS Group, and requested that the City Administrator develop an Ordinance and Resolution to implement rate changes.

City Council held a public hearing on May 20th to review the wastewater rate study. Council later met in a work session on June 7th to discuss several structure and financing options and agreed by consensus on several key points. Those agreements were included in the Wastewater Rate Study and will be brought forward by the City Administrator in a resolution as required by City Ordinance.

According to the Wastewater Rate Study that Council adopted on June 17th, the City intends to pursue a USDA Rural Utility Service loan and grant to refinance existing debt and fund the cost of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade project.

Council also intends to change the structure of wastewater billing, moving to a fixed and variable model with a meter multiplier.

Under this billing structure, bills would have a fixed charge based on the size of the meter at each customers location, plus a variable charge based on water consumption during winter months.

City Administrator Bill

Haack informed Council that he intends to have the rate structure in place and ready to be implemented no later than October 1, 2013.

As part of the new rate structure, the City Administrator will work with the Budget Committee in 2014 to review and analyze the changes in order to make a second rate adjustment if needed for fiscal year 2014-15.

Great American Bash

4th of July

Parade 6pm

Jesse Cain Concert 7:30pm

Fireworks Show at Dusk