

Schools Update: Making It Better, Together

By Dr. Ken Cox

I don't do Facebook much, but once in a while I check out what is being said on the Vernonia Community Page and to see what others are saying in 'cyberspace.' On occasion I see a posting expressing concern over our lack of playground equipment, the condition of the fields, or similar issues. I was encouraged during the last week of school when I visited a meeting where a community member took action about their concern about playground equipment. She actually came in and met with an administrator and a board member to discuss what could be done. It is refreshing to know that there are so many community members who are committed to finding ways to improve our new schools.

I know that everyone in Vernonia who pays taxes contributes to the new school and I appreciate your annual support, which will last for many years. We would not be where we are today if the voting patrons of the Vernonia School District hadn't stepped up and passed the bond in 2009 for \$13,000,000! I want to personally thank each of you for your current and continued support.

I am also very appreciative of the many corporations, foundations, and individuals from outside our community who helped make our new schools a reality. There aren't very many communities that can build a \$40,000,000 school by passing a \$13,000,000 bond. We had a lot of help from so many different individuals and government agencies. I would

especially like to thank Governor Kitzhaber and the Oregon Legislature for their support of our program by making \$4,000,000 in emergency funds available to our project and the staff of the Oregon Department of Energy who have offered their help and support for our project even before it was a project and are continuing to do so today.

It is my hope that as we continue to move forward as a school and as a community that we can do so by keeping the lines of communication open so that suggestions and information can flow in both directions as needed. There are a lot of changes headed our way as we march into the future so let's continue to work together, marching in step to make our progress faster and more efficient. Together we can make it better!

Vernonia School Board Report

At the June 13, 2013 Vernonia School Board Meeting:

Board Holds Budget Hearings, Approves Budgets -At the start of the regular business meeting the Board recessed and opened two Budget Hearings.

In the first hearing the Board heard details of the proposed Supplemental Budget the Board was being asked to approve. Because of unexpected funding the District received, a Supplemental Budget was necessary. The Supplemental Budget added funding to the Federal REAP Fund, The Forestry Program Fund, the Food service Fund if necessary and the Capital Reserve. The Board unanimously approved the Supplemental Budget later in the regular business meeting.

The second hearing concerned the 2013-14 Budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox explained that the only change from the approved Budget was the reduction of an additional five days. Cox also noted that the District recently learned that funding from the state would be reduced by \$25,000. Cox stated that because of several resignations the District will be receiving, he expects the District to be able to absorb this deficiency. Cox also noted the budget will only be balanced with an increase of twelve new students into the District next year. The Board adopted the 2013-14 Budget later during the regular business meeting.

Spencer Health and Wellness-The Board received a written report from Sherrie Ford on the Spencer Health and Wellness (SHAW) clinic. Ford provided data on the clinic usage, types of visits and noted that the clinic is filling nearly 80% of their available appointment slots, which is higher than the projected 50%. Clinic staff will be available on Tuesdays at the Vernonia Health Center during the summer to see students; call 503-429-0622 to schedule an appointment.

Collaborations Grant Report-Juliet Safier reported on Student Learning Objectives that teachers are required to write and the new teacher evaluation system that will be implemented in the coming school year. A Collaborations Grant was used to bring teachers back for two days at the end of the school year for a workshop which included a presentation about how to write the goals, practice sessions, and feedback. Teachers also spent time practicing self-evaluations.

Volunteer Report-Volunteer Coordinator Amanda Wolf provided the Board

with a report for the 2012-13 school year. Wolf reported that the District has 384 approved volunteers; this year there were seventy-five active volunteers in the schools, volunteering a total of 3,030 hours; 2731 of those hours were in the classroom. Wolf noted that volunteers helped with PTA, Band & Scrip program, field trips, Run for the Arts, Back Pack program, Power Hour, Community Garden, Picture Day, Lions Club Hearing/Vision Screening, Field Day, Kindergarten Round-Up, and Bicycle Safety Fair.

Spring Sports Report-Athletic Director Gordon Jarman updated the Board on the Middle School and High School spring sports seasons. Jarman also announced that he has received three resignations from coaches: Doren Lower-H.S. Boys Basketball Assistant, Aaron Miller-H.S. Baseball and Randy Shockey-H.S. Softball. Jarman also introduced the idea to the Board of a Vernonia High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Board Approves Calendar Adjustment-The Board approved the 2013-14 instructional calendar which includes 155 student days and 170 contract days. The first full day of school will be September 9th; the last day will be June 3rd.

Board Adopts Supplemental Budget and 2013-14 Budget-The Board adopted a Supplemental Budget for the current fiscal year. They also adopted the 2013-14 Budget. (see full story on front page)

Board Authorizes Interim Financing-The Board authorized the District to seek interim financing of up to \$1.25 million dollars for construction and demolition projects. (see full story on front page)

Board Ratifies OSEA Contract-The Board ratified a new contract with Oregon State Employees Association, Chapter 67. The collective bargaining agreement for classified employees runs from 2013 to 2016 and covers custodial and maintenance workers, instructional assistants, library technicians, secretaries and other district employees that are not teachers.

Board Approves M.O.A. With Food Bank-The Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the District and the Vernonia Cares Food Bank that would allow Vernonia Cares, in the event of an emergency, to relocate food to the Vernonia School.

Board Accepts Three Resignations-The Board accepted the resignation of

three individuals: Administrator James Brookins, and teachers Brad Baker and Rob Izzett.

Board Accepts Election Results-The Board Accepted the Election Results for School Board provided by Columbia County. All incumbents were re-elected: James Krahn to Position 1, Ernie Smith to Position 4, and Carrie Levenseller to Position 5. Brett Costley was elected to Position 6 through write-in vote.

Board Approves Hiring of School Psychologist-The Board approved the hiring of Brittany Waugh as half-time School Psychologist. The District had previously been contracting with the ESD to provide these services and will save money by hiring this position directly as a licensed contractor.

Superintendent Report-District Superintendent Dr. Ken Cox provided the

Board with Board Meeting Schedule for the upcoming year. He also provided the Board with a copy of the "My College Options" report. He informed the Board that the greenhouse project is progressing. He also informed the Board that the demolition of the old school site has been extended and is expected to be completed in July. He also informed the Board that the District is overseeing the Summer Meals Program this year, which starts on June 17th.

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you have a service to offer?
A job opening?
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phone: 503-367-0098
email: ads@vernoniasvoice.com

VERNONIA VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE GOLF BENEFIT



Sunday, August 4th, 2013
7:00 AM
(Jamboree Weekend)

Vernonia Golf Course
15961 Timber Rd. East
Vernonia, OR 97064

Please join in supporting "Toy & Joy"
to purchase toys for local kids for Christmas

Format: Scramble, Shotgun Start (4 person teams)

Entry Fee: \$60.00 per person
Due by: July 29, 2013
(Before July 4th for \$10 off per person)

Entry Fee includes: Green fees, 1 Cart per team, Team Photo, Surf & Turf Lunch and Raffle Ticket

Lunch, Raffle & Awards following the tournament.
Putting, Longest Drive & Closest to Pin Contests

Make checks payable to:
Vernonia Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association
501(c)3 Tax deductible

For more information, please contact Randy Carlton: 503-429-8252,
503-791-8309 or Email: vernoniagolfbenefit@gmail.com