

Vernonia School Board Report

At the June 12, 2014 School Board Meeting:

Board Approves 2014-15 Budget- The School Board voted to approve the 2014-15 budget. The budget projects \$6,224,094 in resources and calls for 158 school days for students and 173 contract days for staff. Among the changes, the budgets takes into account a reduction in expenses to the Career and Technology Education program due to a one year leave of absence for shop teacher Cecil Fellas. The budget includes increases in expenses for special education transportation and for district technology. Linda Allen, the district art teacher, has been increased to full time; Andy Morrow, the band teacher, has been increased to full time.

Kindergarten Attendance Improves- Elementary Principal Aaron Miller presented a report by David Spackman that tracked kindergarten student attendance. Spackman's report showed significant progress with average daily attendance rising from 84.2% in 2012-13 to 92% in 2013-14. Chronically absent students dropped from 24 in 2012-13 to 14 in 2013-14.

Grade Configurations- Principal Miller reported an increase in enrollment in kindergarten through 2nd grade, forcing a need for an additional teacher. The recommendation is to have five K-2 blended classes with approximately 23-24 students in each class. Miller says he is looking at the budget to determine how funding could be made available.

Board Approves Transfer of Funds- The Board approved Resolution 1314-03 which takes unanticipated revenues of \$302,198 and appropriated those funds to General Funds line items. The Resolution also anticipates a shortfall in the General Fund from Donation Revenue of \$215,000 and transferred those

funds from the Capital Reserve Fund and in the Food Service Revenue of \$12,000 and transferred those funds from the General Fund.

Construction Project Delayed- Superintendent Ken Cox told the School Board that construction on the new shop building has been delayed. Cox said that construction project manager Rod McDowell informed him that the school needs to have a conditional use permit and go through a planning review before beginning construction. According to McDowell this will keep the shop from being completed in time for the start of the new school year. Cox told the Board that the District will need to extend their contract with McDowell to complete the project. Board member Ernie Smith expressed displeasure with extending McDowell's contract.

Spencer Park Construction Contract Awarded- The contract for final improvements for Spencer Park has been awarded to Green Thumb Landscape. Work on the park is anticipated to mobilize on July 28 with seeding targeted for September 11.

Dirt Declared Surplus- The Board declared as surplus the large mound of dirt at the school campus. The dirt is free to anyone who would like to haul it. You must contact the district office first.

Board Approves School Calendar- The Board approved an instructional calendar with 158 days for students and 173 days for staff. The first day of school will be September 8 with an orientation day on September 5 for 6th and 9th graders, new students and foreign exchange students. The last day of classes is scheduled for June 4th. Graduation is scheduled for Saturday, May 30th. There are five snow make-up days built into the schedule.

Board Grants Leaves of Absence- The Board approved a request for a Leave of Absence by Shop Instructor Cecil Fellas. Superintendent Cox also informed the Board that he had approved a Leave of Absence for Jan Marcouillier-Dyer, an Instructional Assistant and District Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Coordinator. Superintendent Cox also noted the retirement after thirty years of Marsha Mclaughlin and of Catherine (Cici) Bell after seventeen years.

District Approves Transportation Contract Amendment- The Board authorized the Superintendent to negotiate a contract amendment with Curl's Bus Service for transportation services. Curl's recently received an unanticipated \$25,000 insurance rate increase and is asking the District to pay half of that increase. The School District is reimbursed by the state for 80% of their transportation costs. Curl's also requested the extension of their contract for one year to 2020, so they could amortize the cost of a new bus they purchased.

Board Approves MOA With Employees- The Board approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Confidential/Supervisory Employees Group for salaries. The group includes the Maintenance Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, Fiscal Assistant and Food Services. The Board was also asked to review a MOA with the Administrative Employees Group but took no action.

Hands-On Art Donates Funds to Arts Programs- School Board Chair Bill Langmaid told the Board that Hands-On Art hosted the Jr. Salmon Auction and has donated \$1,375 from the proceeds to arts programs at the school.

Schools Update: Summer Activities

By Aaron Miller

Another school year has passed, and although teachers and students are on break, there are many summer activities taking place within the Vernonia School District (VSD). We are very excited about the progress we continue to make in developing our new campus, and thank you, our community, for your continuing support and efforts in providing our students with the best education and facilities possible.

Here is a list of some of the activities and changes happening in the district this summer:

- The Summer Meals Program will again be offering free lunches to kids ages 1-18. There is no income requirement, no paperwork and anyone can participate whether they live in Vernonia, or not. Adults are encouraged to eat lunch as well, with a price of \$2.50 for anyone over the age of 18. Lunch is served from 11:30AM-1:00PM, Monday through Friday at Grace Family Fellowship, located at 957 State Avenue. Volunteers are needed and welcome. Please call 503-748-9193 with any questions.
- Dr. Kenneth Cox will be moving on to be the Superintendent of the Minidoka School District in Rupert, Idaho. His efforts to build a new school on higher ground were amazing, fruitful and so very much appreciated. The "Kenneth W. Cox Computer Lab" was dedicated in his honor, as Dr. Cox will truly be missed, and now, will always be remembered.
- I, Aaron Miller, will be taking over Superintendent responsibilities in Vernonia. My door is open, and my phone is on if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions you would like to discuss in our on-going journey

to meet the needs of our students and community.

- Our native plant nursery and greenhouse is currently up and running, producing plants for district projects as well as projects sponsored by the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (UNWC). Final completion is slated for the end of the summer.
- Receipt of an Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Career and Technical Education (CTE) grant, along with a generous donation from the Lloyd Johnston family, will provide the district with a new shop facility for our Construction, and Robotics programs.
- Six Vernonia High School students will be employed through a CTE Internship program, with 2 students each working with Stub Stewart State Park, the UNWC and the VSD.
- The Vernonia Education Foundation Sports Initiative has worked diligently to

- raise funds for our sports facilities, and their plan is to begin work this summer on the softball field at the new site. If all goes as planned, the softball field will be completed in time for next year's season.
- A \$10,000 Oregon State Athletics Association (OSAA) grant, as well as a matching donation from a local community member, will enable a practice football field to be installed complete with goal posts on the new site.
- The Vernonia Community Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has been raising funds and is almost ready to purchase the next play structure to be installed on the school playground. Preliminary plans are for installation to take place in August, with a "grand-opening" ceremony slated for Open House night on October 9, 2014.
- 85 new-to-us computers were donated to the VSD by Portland Community College. They will be reimaged and

ready for student and staff use by the start of school in September.

- New video surveillance cameras and classroom speakers have been purchased through a security and safety grant. These devices will be installed over the summer, providing our campus with much needed extra security.
- The dirt pile on the east side of campus has been declared surplus, and will be available for distribution within the next couple of weeks. A process for how this dirt will be made available to the public will be developed, and shared soon.

As I walk through the building each day, I am still in awe that it is ours. It is an amazing facility, and we are so fortunate to be able to learn and work here. I thank each and every one of you in the community for making it possible, and look forward to continuing our partnership in making the Vernonia School District the best that it can be.

