

School Board Report

At the June 8, 2017 Vernonia School Board Meeting:

Board Discusses Bond Expenditure Priorities, Schedules Public Meetings – The Board discussed a list of 13 bond expenditure project priorities provided by Superintendent Aaron Miller. The Board scheduled two public meetings for June 22 and 24 where they will take input from District patrons and also look for community expertise on aspects of the bond projects. (See full story on front page.)



Ernie Smith (left) and Cari Levenseller (right) were joined by Superintendent Aaron Miller at their final School Board meeting.

Board Approves Sale of Bonds – The Board voted to approve Resolution 1617-07, authorizing the issuance, sale and delivery of \$6.8 million in bonds, approved by voters in the May 2017 election. Sale of the bonds is scheduled to take place on July 12.

Board Adopts 2017-18 Budget – Following a Public hearing, during which there was no public comment or testimony, the Board voted to approve Resolution 1617-09, adopting the 2017-18 budget.

Board Approves Superintendent Contract – The Board approved a new three year contract for Superintendent Aaron Miller, who will also continue to serve as Elementary School Principal as part of his duties.

Board Accepts Election Results – The Board voted to accept the Columbia County Election Abstract which showed Susan Wagner elected to Position 1, Melissa Zavales elected to Position 5, and Brett Costley elected to Position 6. Stacey Pelster won election to Position 4 after re-

ceiving 207 write-in votes; Del Allen received 129 write-in votes for Position 4 under several different names.

District Honors School Board Members at Final Meeting – The District honored two long time members of the School Board who both chose to not run for re-election and were participating in their final meeting. Cari Levenseller has served on the Board for 17 years and Ernie Smith has served for ten years. Both Levenseller and Smith had family members in the audience and were presented with a plaque and a gift by District Superintendent Aaron Miller.

New Hires Announced – Superintendent Aaron Miller announced to the Board several new hires for the District for open positions for next school year. Kendra Berryman has been hired as the new 2nd grade teacher. Berryman has two years teaching experience in a private, early education program. Justin Benassi has been hired as the new 3rd grade teacher and has eight years experience working at a charter school in Woodburn, OR. Kelli Corey has been hired as the new High School science teacher and has been teaching in a middle school in Virginia for four years. Debbie Stahlnecker, who has worked in the District for ten years as the Title I specialist, has been hired as the Middle School special education instructor. Miller also announced

that Stacy Adams, who is already an employee in the District, has been hired to fill the open Elementary School secretary position.

Board Approves Calendar Adjustment – Based on a recommendation by Superintendent Aaron Miller, the Board approved an adjustment to the school calendar. The District has added February 16 and April 27, 2018 as student contact days and August 28, 2017 as a staff professional development day. Miller noted that the passage of the school bond allows the District to use money that was earmarked for debt payment, and that adding instructional days is a priority for him.

Board Approves New Auditing Contract – The Board approved a three year contract with Pauly, Rogers, and Co., P.C. to provide auditing services for the District. The District had been notified that the previous firm was no longer available to provide these services.

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Aaron Miller reported that the District received its annual monitoring visit for The Old Mill Marsh, the wetlands the District is currently required to maintain as part of mitigation for the new campus site construction. Miller said the District is in their last year of a five year obligation with the Corps of Engineers, and reported that the area that holds water is meeting criteria, but the area surrounding the low areas needs more snowberry planted and cultivation of natural lupine

plants, which will take place this fall and allow the District to meet final project requirements.

Building Report – Middle School/High School Principal Nate Underwood reported that Project Based Learning Class will have two classes next year, one for freshmen and sophomores and one for juniors and seniors. Underwood also reported that the AVID interviews have been completed with 8th grade students for selection for the program for next year. He told the Board the school received a two year grant to continue funding the Youth Transition Program, under the direction of Beth Kintz.

Elementary School Principal Aaron Miller reported that 180 parents and students took part in the first VES Family STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) Night, which included tower building, geometric pattern work, boat making, catapulting, and basic robotics. Miller also reported that Edna Vasquez performed Mexican folk songs as part of the Artist in Residence program, which is funded by the Run for the Arts fundraiser events.

Board Declines Support for No Smoking in Parks – The Board took no action on a request from fellow Board member Brittanie Roberts to offer official support for a smoking ban in city parks that Roberts intends to propose to the Vernonia City Council. The Board had differing views on the issues and declined to take a position.

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Vernonia Students of the Month

May 2017



Blake Rutledge Grade 4

Blake was selected for his academic achievement after vastly improving his reading scores this year. He is known as a great friend who is kind, patient, and a good listener. Blake says his favorite subject is science and he participated in the after school robotics club. He hopes to play soccer this fall and he enjoys making videos for You Tube with his friends.

Emily Mendelsohn Grade 8

Emily is known for trying her best, participating in class and encouraging other students to do their best. She is also respectful to her teachers. Emily played alto sax in the band and sings in the school choir. She enjoys drawing, writing, and role playing in her spare time.



Haley Linsay Grade 11

Haley is a very active and involved student. She says her favorite class is Leadership and she sings in the choir. She is a member of the National Honor Society and was the Junior Class President. She will be part of the cheer squad next year. In her spare time she plays piano and guitar.

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Sponsored by Senator Betsy Johnson