

Funderburg stops reading of OSSOM letter from Alaska senator

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ceived prior to a hearing, where all sides of a dispute are presented, could be perceived as prejudicing board members.

The board has established rules that "...the intent of the district [is] to solve problems and address complaints as close as possible to their origination." This would require employee concerns to first be addressed by the employee's supervisor (ie., teacher/principal). If the issue is not resolved at this level, it moves up the line of authority through a four-step process of investigation and appeal. Staff members have formal grievance procedures specified by contract. Funderburg emphasized that nothing in any policy is intended to cir-

cumvent any contractual agreement, and that the procedure outlined in both the certified and classified contracts should be utilized.

There is a similar four-step process for the public. Following an initial complaint, the building principal or supervisor will make an investigation. An appeal of the principal's decision could be made to the superintendent. The board is prohibited from hearing charges against an employee in open session. Quoting from the policy, "To do so could expose the Board to a charge of being party to slander and would prejudice any necessity to act as the final review ..."

The only exceptions to the four-step resolution process

are complaints about the superintendent. Funderburg reviewed portions of his contract with the board defining the relationship between the board and the superintendent. The superintendent has the primary responsibility for execution of Board policy and management of the district (including all personnel matters). The board's responsibilities are to formulate and adopt policy, establish goals, and the hiring, evaluating and dismissing of the superintendent.

Funderburg told the board that while certified and classified personnel have contracts with a formal grievance procedure, supervisory and confidential employees have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that offers less protection. Hansen said that hiring a superintendent was the most difficult task he has ever been asked to accomplish as a board member.

To address concerns she has heard from staff members about being fired for making complaints, Wallace asked about a policy approved in 1997 that says staff members "shall refrain from critical or negative comments or discussion of each other in the presence of administrators, teachers, classified staff, students, parents, board members or other community members".

Funderburg responded that while an employee can be fired "on the spot" for violating policy, this is not how the district operates. He indicated that the district uses the complaint procedures described in its policies and contracts. However, since most disputes are resolved at the building level, appeals to the superintendent or the board are rare. Hansen said that the board is the final decision making body and reminded the audience that personnel and program comments should be directed to the lowest level first.

Sally Harrison, a longtime Vernonia resident and currently mayor, hesitated to read a letter from her son, a Vernonia High School graduate who is currently serving as a senator in Alaska, concerning funds for the high school OSSOM group. Hansen asked her to begin the letter but, when she read an accusation that Funderburg had made a decision to hold OSSOM responsible for funds, Funderburg stopped the reading, though not before Harrison read a few additional words about Funderburg and the district not supporting the OSSOM program.

Funderburg said that this was a perfect example for applying the policy that the board had just finished discussing because, he explained, he had no knowledge of OSSOM funding and had certainly not made any decision regarding their funds. VHS Principal Curt Scholl was also surprised by the accusation. He told the board that the OSSOM group had ended the year in a deficit because they had not received some expected funds. He said that the group has strong support from students and staff. Harrison presented a check to the high school for the disputed amount.

Employee comments

Two school employees, Dana Hyde and Gretchen Lindauer, spoke to the board. Lindauer, who is Food Service Supervisor for the district, was referred to the grievance procedure for resolution of problems she cannot resolve with her supervisor.

Hyde, an instructional assistant who was moved from the high school to the grade school, told the board that "your facial expressions are seen by everybody," referring to apparently negative reactions of some board members to an appeal by students (at the August meeting) to leave Hyde in her position at the high school.

Instructional Time

Parent Amy Ceiloaha told the board that extending the kindergarten hours was "really, really good" and that students would receive twice the education offered last year. She was, however, concerned about the shortened day at the grade school. Combining a fifteen minute later start and earlier release than last year, with an earlier release time on Friday, she said, instructional hours were reduced by two and a half hours at the grade school. Saying she understands the attempt to stagger bus loading and unloading, Ceiloaha said this was too much change.

Funderburg presented information to the board comparing the number of minutes of instructional time for kindergarten to fifth grade students throughout the county. Clatskanie is the only district in the county that continues to offer half-day kindergarten and has the shortest school day through grade six. As presented, Vernonia had the longest school day in the county, but the figures given did not include early release Fridays. Wallace and Levenseller agreed to work with Principal Aaron Miller to investigate potential changes in the grade school schedule that would facilitate the arrival and departure of students. They will report their findings at the next meeting.

In other business the board:

- Accepted the resignation of fifth grade teacher Rachael Camp.

- Approved hiring Lindsey Dunkel as fifth grade teacher, head softball coach and high school assistant volleyball coach.

- Approved Justin Ward as middle school assistant volleyball coach.

- Approved Kara Bjorklund and Lorrie Webb to share the position of high school activities director.

River City Speedway Results

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Liner. "I've had to work hard all year while competing with tough drivers like Fordyce, Smith and Kari Puncocar. I couldn't ask for a better race car and crew that Marty has provided me with and I wouldn't even be able to compete without all their help."

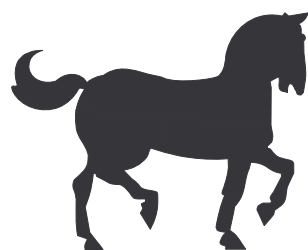
The sportsman division had identical top-two finishes both days as Randy Allen of Sandy, took the checkered flag in the A mains with his John's Frame Shop/American Tire Monte Carlo. Rainier's Corey Cook was runnerup twice in his Chevy Lumina, but he continues to lead the series standings, followed by Allen. Tricia "Great" Brittain of St. Helens and Longview's Jacob Brooks & "Dunn" captured sportsman B main wins. Scappoose drivers Kirk Brissett and Tim Williams posted top-five A main finishes Saturday and Tommy Elstoen of St. Helens, had a career best fourth place A main finish Sunday.

Defending street stock champion Scott Puncocar of Hillsboro, who is seeking a third consecutive title, won Saturday's A main and "The Enforcer" Terry Moss of St. Helens was a close runnerup as his Chevy Malibu was bumper-to-bumper with Puncocar's Camaro.

In Sunday's street stock events, Portland's Chris Hallberg had a spectacular effort as he won the B main in his Marty's Transmission Pontiac

Firebird. The top-two finishers from this event qualify for a spot in the A main at the rear of the 16-car lineup, with Hallberg and Kelso's Dennis Munger in the last row positions. Hallberg expertly maneuvered past his rivals and was side-by-side with frontrunner Jon "Razor" Gillett of Rainier, by the 27th lap on the quarter-mile clay oval track. After three laps of exciting door-to-door racing, Hallberg edged ahead on lap 30 and remained there the last 10 circuits to get the incredible last-to-first, come-from-behind victory.

Vernonia's "Hollywood" Gary Meyer and Warrenton's Mark Guindon captured the mini stock A mains. Mike Harrison of St. Helens, recorded a season best third place finish in Saturday's mini stock main with his Pastime Tavern/Hudson Portable Toilets sponsored Datsun. Harrison followed with a sixth place effort Sunday. Scott McMullen of Deer Island, recorded two top-five A main finishes, as he was fourth Saturday and fifth on Sunday.



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