

**Redmond School District
School Board Meeting
May 25, 2011**

In Attendance: Chair Jim Erickson, Vice-Chair Cathy Miller, Directors Paul Rodby and Ric Little, Superintendent Shay Mikalson, RSD Staff-Mike McIntosh, Trish Huspek, Gina Blanchette, Mollie O'Brien, Lynn Evans, Martha Hinman, RPA Director Michael Bremont, Bob Perry, Media-Leslie Pugmire-Hole (*Spokesman*), Patrick Cliff (*Bend Bulletin*), Association representatives, Judy Newman, Dru Carpenter and approximately 75 community and staff members.

Board Chair Jim Erickson called the Board meeting to order with a quorum of four at 5:35 p.m.

Jim Erickson thanked the Redmond Proficiency Academy for hosting this evenings meeting. The Board has had a chance to visit each one of our schools this year. It has been wonderful to see the opportunities afforded to students in the District, including the RPA. During the listening session the Board heard from parents, faculty and students about what is happening at the RPA. It was clear that incredible opportunities are being offered to the students. They heard many wonderful things about the staff, classes and learning environment.

ACTION ITEM

Redmond School District Audit Firm Recommendation

Mike McIntosh, Director of Operations and Mollie O'Brien, Business Manager spoke to the Board regarding the Request for Proposals (RFP) that was published for audit services. Five proposals were received, reviewed and evaluated by the Finance Committee on May 3, 2011. The District has contracted the same auditor for a number of years and best practice dictates a new perspective be obtained. Mike reviewed the qualifications of the firm that is being recommended to the Board.

Mollie O'Brien, Business Manager indicated the selection of the recommended firm was influenced by the depth of the people available to the district. The firm has a full time audit staff who does not engage in tax work. Because of this they would be available to the district during tax season which will allow for pre-audit work to be completed before the year ends. In addition, their fee was less.

Ric Little stated that he approves of the choice of Paul Rogers and Co., PC.

The Board is charged with appointing and awarding a contract to the District auditor. The District Finance Committee is recommending the Board award the five year audit, commencing with the June 30, 2011 audit, contract to the firm of Paul Rogers and Co., PC for a first year fee of \$28,800.

Mike McIntosh stated that a five year contract is standard for the district. If there is a performance issue or a question about fees the district would have the ability to renegotiate or cancel the contract.

Paul Rodby moved that the firm of Pauly Rogers and Co., PC be awarded a five-year contract as negotiated by staff to provide audit services to the District as recommended by the Finance Committee. Cathy Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Consent Agenda

- Personnel Changes
- School Board Minutes from May 11, 2011

Cathy Miller moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Paul Rodby seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

PROCEDURAL ITEM

Jim Erickson stated that it is the Board's job to hear concerns and to clarify policy and direction. Their hope is to better understand each other so a resolution can be reached.

Citizen Participation for Non-Agenda Items

Val Grindstaff – read a statement to the Board to give perspective about her life as a teacher. Her statement stated her parents were teachers and by watching them she learned that being a teacher was a thankless job. She became an educator to make a difference in children's lives. She believes the teachers in the district do make a difference. She stated that teachers are accountable for so much. Teacher accountability and responsibility increases every year but since the economy has taken a hit, their salary has not been increased and has declined. "Teachers all over Oregon are being asked to do more and more with less time, less support and less compensation." What is overlooked during times like this is that teachers are taxpayers too. Due to the economy, like others, she is the main source of income for her family. "I am wondering if there are better ways to solve our budget crisis, than to put it on the backs of employees."

Jim Erickson stated that the Board does value teachers. He acknowledges that times are tough and the decisions that need to be made are not right and unjust and the Board understands that.

Barry Branaugh spoke to the Board on behalf of many of the staff who are in the audience tonight. He said that this is the fourth time the district has come to certified staff asking for their help to resolve budget shortfalls. Each time they have been willing to do whatever they could. However, there comes a point and time when people say, "I can't do it anymore." Mr. Branaugh spoke to the additional things teachers have taken on. Teachers have said "We will help as much as we can, but we can't do it all." Teachers care about the student's education but it comes to the point when we have to make choices. The scarcity of resources causes some difficult choices to be made. "Sometimes you need to choose quality over quantity." They will continue to work hard, "But we won't work for free." Is it best to have class sizes that are large to ensure a full school year or would it be best to cut days?" Everyone wants to work a full contract, but that might not be possible. He doesn't envy any of the choices that the district will need to make.

Jim Erickson stated that as a Board they believe in collaborative processes and he is thankful that teachers have continued to be willing to find solutions.

Karen George – High School Teacher - Wondered why things are not contracted out; (i.e., yard maintenance and custodial services) so that overhead expenses can be decreased. She asked why we don't have an outside company do an analysis of the district to evaluate how we spend our money and to determine if there is a better way to allocate our resources. She is concerned that district staff are weed eating and mowing lawns and wonders why we are continuing to do that instead of paying teachers. "A mown lawn is not going to provide children a higher quality education."

Cathy Miller stated that the district has a responsibility to maintain fields to ensure that they remain safe from personal injury.

Mike McIntosh stated that every few years the district looks at transportation and the possibility of contracting those services out. Each time, they have realized there are hidden issues that need to be weighed in contracting those services out. Mike referred staff to the website for the Budget Q & A that have been posted.

Katie Ardt – Lynch – She is at the top of pay scale so the potential of not having steps would not affect her but it is problematic for the newer teachers. This would be an increased hardship on them and she does not want to see that happen.

Rachel Sarrett – RHS/Hartman – Teachers work hard and make many sacrifices. She is the sole provider for her family and having additional cuts would be a hardship for her family. She questions the wisdom in cutting salaries vs. cutting additional days. She stated that only when the community “feels the hit” will change occur.

Renee Hamilton – Hartman – Approximately 11 years ago the district had enough money to hire an environmental consultant to audit our energy use. Though strict implementation of rules the district saved a great deal of money per month by implementing energy saving measures. She still has the report and would be willing to share that with district leadership. She believes there was an approximate \$10,000 savings per month through the implementation of the energy saving measures. When it comes to the question of pay cuts or a cut in days, she feels that the community needs to “feel it” in order for Salem to understand that we need sustainable funding for schools so she would favor cutting additional days.

Brandy Berlin- Hartman - stated that a number of teachers have taken second jobs in order to make ends meet. They teach all day and then worry about what they will be teaching at night. If days are not cut out of the schedule, teachers will be working without compensation as well as paying for daycare for their own children. She also reminded everyone that when a teacher takes a second job they are taking jobs away from the community.

Dennis - Taxpayer – His wife has been a teacher and he suggested that as an expense cutting measure teachers could cut back on donations to political groups like the OEA.

Chris Whipple – John Tuck – She stated that along with contributing to the OEA she feeds eight of her students every day and sends food home with them every day as well. She also provides snacks to the class. However, she recently had to tell her class that she can no longer afford to provide those snacks.

Jan – Taxpayer and former teacher. She has spoken with many elderly citizens who are worried about staying in their homes. She understands about sacrifices teachers make because she taught for six years before she had children. Teachers make a choice to be a service to the community. Many parents feel they are not being listened to and their children are not receiving the education they deserve. “We all have to make choices when we pay our bills and choose our careers. Those are choices that everyone needs to make.”

Kathy Eddy-Vern Patrick – Stated that she has been under more stress than any of her previous years in two other districts. She made the following statements:

- The most recent proposal includes freezing steps and columns. She has colleagues who are spending \$20-\$40,000 to get their masters degrees. These are new teachers who have a lot of energy and excitement. They are the ones who will be hurt by the freeze on steps and columns.
- She has heard that there have been cuts at the district office. She has also heard of positions being added. She would like to know the actual savings that has occurred from the district office cuts.
- She stated Vern Patrick Elementary has 200 students less than they had a few years ago but they still have a full time principal. She feels that it might be necessary for some principals will go back into a classroom and to assign other principals to cover two buildings.
- She is tired of hearing negative things in the Bulletin about teachers. She has never thought her paycheck is more important than her students.

Kirin Stryker - OMS – Asked teachers in the audience for a show of hands if: “You are in it for the money? Have your bills and cost of living increased? Have you taken a second job? Do you make more money than you did in 2008?”

Hilda Beltran – Hartman - Spoke about the Bend Bulletin editorial. She expressed her frustration that the Board did not make a public statement condemning the article. She stated “Some people in the public have the

impression that some of us are unprofessional. If there are issues about unprofessionalism in the classroom, it is up to the administration to address those concerns with those individual teachers. However, it is just as important for the Board to publically state that Redmond has a professional body that they support.”

Jim Erickson stated the Board publically supports teachers every chance they get. They are thankful how teachers grow children and how they change lives. It is his hope that people will be able to appreciate the position the Board is in.

Jan White - When the Bulletin printed the article the Board should have submitted a response in support of the teachers.

Marcia Bradley – Vern Patrick – Loves her kids, job and is happy to be a teacher. She asked a question regarding allowing students to transfer to other districts. Decisions need to be made that respect our district – we need to keep those students here.

Bob Perry – Thanked Paul Rodby for his great service to the community. He stated he feels it is important to get the word out about the improvements that are being made in the district. The district is working hard to get teachers to a higher level and we need to market that point. However, as he has spoken with community members they have challenged him to go into a classroom and “See if you can see the difference between a teacher and a student – they dress the same.” He asked teachers to, “Elevate themselves, to look inwardly to see if you can elevate the perception of educators.”

Val Grindstaff – Stated that obtaining a Masters Degree is not an option for teachers. They have a certain amount of time to obtain that degree in order to keep their license.

Jim Erickson stated that, “The Board appreciates everyone one of them and that it is not their choice to be in the situation that we find ourselves in. We all have to make choices and those resolutions will be made by the people around the table. Many people’s lives will be affected by the decisions that are made. We need to trust the good hearts of the people around the negotiation table.”

David Boucher – Terrebonne – Expressed that there is a long prevailing concept that “Teachers are missionaries and they are not.

Superintendent Mikalson spoke briefly regarding the inter-district transfers. School funding is based on last year’s actual number of students or our projections. We are projecting a decrease in enrollment. There is a 177 student difference between how many attend other districts and how many come to Redmond. It would take over 100 of those students to come back to the district before we would realize additional revenue.

Judy Newman – thanked the Board for allowing teachers to speak with them tonight. Their intention was not to bring negativity to this situation. It was to give everyone a perspective on the people who will be casting their vote – to provide a face with a name.

PRESENTATION

Oregon Community Foundation

Jamie Aguirre from the Oregon Community Foundation was in attendance to present a check for \$50,000 to Vern Patrick Elementary School to support their second year of community schools. In determining who would receive the grant they travelled from Lapine to the Dalles. Vern Patrick was only one of five schools who will be awarded a grant this award. Mr. Aguirre expressed his appreciation for the work that teachers do; for making sure that families and students come first and for allowing the OCF to come into the community to help reach that goal. Jessica Courier from the Oregon Community Foundation stated that Vern Patrick needs to be celebrated for their first year success and that the OCF is proud to be a partner with the district.

Kristen Rooney-Gleeson, Principal at Vern Patrick Elementary stated that with the support of OCF and building staff student growth has equaled or in some cases, exceeded the growth in the state.

Redmond Proficiency Academy

Michael Bremont, Director of the Redmond Proficiency Academy (RPA) briefed the board on the following:

- One of things they are most excited about is a possible agreement with Willamette University to be a lab school for them. They would send teachers to the RPA for a short period of time to learn the RPA model. The dean of the university and several faculty members came on Tuesday to speak with staff and students. It is possible that RPA students will be able to take classes from Willamette University professors.
- Earlier in the week they received an ASPIRE grant to begin that program at the RPA. They received \$9000 from the Serendipity Foundation to put on a Challenge Day; a program that provides an opportunity for students within a school to build relationships and then flow out to the rest of the school to address social issues like bullying.
- Because of a grant the RPA received from Bend Research, staff recently took 60 students to the coast. The students worked with the OSU staff at the Hatfield Science Center.
- The RPA now has the ability to offer SAT and ACT testing on site. They require all RPA juniors and seniors to take the SAT. Over half of the students who took the test were Redmond High School students.
- They have taken students on college tours this year to Oregon universities, Gonzaga, Idaho schools, and some schools on the east coast. Several RPA students have been accepted at an east coast school.
- At last night's awards banquet they awarded over \$250,000 in college scholarships.

Cathy Miller stated there was recently a question regarding the Redmond Education Foundation scholarships and if RPA students are eligible for those. The Foundation determined that RPA students are Redmond School District students and therefore are eligible to receive Foundation scholarships.

Paul Rodby expressed his appreciation to Michael Bremont and the RPA for hosting the Board meeting. It was a great opportunity to see the diversity that is offered to the students. Mr. Rodby stated that the students who gave the tour of the building were very impressive and that it is apparent RPA students will be successful and college ready upon graduation.

Cathy Miller expressed her appreciation to Mr. Bremont and the RPA for reducing the cap of Redmond students who can attend the program by 75 students for next year. Mr. Bremont stated that they feel they are a part of the district and they wanted to help in any way they could.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that the district is very fortunate to have a partnership with Mr. Bremont and the RPA. He has a great deal of respect for him as an educator.

Alternative Learning Options Evaluation

Peter Miller, ALO Evaluator, expressed his appreciation to the RSD School Board. He stated that it is a thankless job and acknowledges that the Board is responsible for making some very hard decisions. He thanked them for the support they provide the students in the district.

As required by School Board Policy IGBHA Alternative Education Programs, the Redmond School District is required to perform an annual evaluation of alternative education programs made in accordance with ORS 336.665 and OAR 581-022-1350.

The evaluation process was developed in collaboration between Redmond School District and the High Desert Education Service District and incorporates Board Policy IGBHA – Alternative Education Programs. Administrative Regulation IGBHA-AR is currently being developed by Superintendent Mikalson to go from policy to procedure.

Peter Miller, Alternative Education Programs evaluator provided the Board with a Contract & Charter School Evaluation document. Within that document COIC Redmond Skill Center and the Redmond Proficiency Academy were evaluated. All contract and Charter Schools within the Redmond School District have applied, been evaluated, and approved for Accreditation by the Northwest Accreditation Commission.

Also provided were recommendations for the Redmond Board of Directors to consider and approve.

Both COIC and the RPA are fulfilling the requirements of their contracts.

After having the opportunity to review the document provided, the Board will take action on the report at the next Board meeting.

Jim Erickson expressed his appreciation to Peter Miller for his work on the report.

High School Transition Update

Superintendent Mikalson provided an update to the Board regarding the secondary program recommendations and high school boundary and transfer recommendations. Superintendent Mikalson reviewed the following items; opening enrollment, Ridgeview High School will open with grades 9-11 in the fall of 2012, and will offer varsity level athletics at the Class 4A. Also reviewed were academic programs at both comprehensive high schools. The first decision point the Board will need to make is around boundaries; closed boundaries, open boundaries and fixed boundaries. The staff's recommendation would be a fixed boundary with a transfer policy available to students who want to attend a high school outside of their assigned attendance area. The assigned high school would be based on the middle school boundary assignment.

Also provided was a Redmond High School Visioning and Programming Work Plan and Schedule. Superintendent Mikalson stated that Redmond High School will become a new building as well with students and staff leaving to be at Ridgeview.

Superintendent Mikalson recommended the Board hold a series of public hearings, beginning in June, to obtain stakeholder input.

Cathy Miller expressed her appreciation to Superintendent Mikalson for the work that has gone into this process already. However, she is concerned about rushing the decision on school boundaries and the inter-district transfer policy. She feels this process needs tremendous collaboration so that parents understand the ramifications of these decisions. Ms. Miller does not feel that the summer months are the best timeframe for a public hearing. She would suggest not engaging in this process until September.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that on at the Board work session on June 22nd he will bring the Board an update on the inter-district transfers and the information that he has received during the exit interviews. Jim Erickson stated that he will be out of town on June 22nd. That work session will be rescheduled to ensure full board participation.

Cathy Miller requested that Michelle Herron be in attendance at the work session to give her perspective on the inter-district transfer and the lottery system due to a cap in numbers at the middle school level at the two community schools.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Financial Statements

Ric Little, Board Director and Finance Committee member provided the April financial and investment reports to the Board. Board members were given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The Finance Committee reviewed the financial statements prior to being presented to the Board. Revenues are falling behind compared to last year due to the decrease in taxes that are being collected due to the housing market. Also reviewed was the RSD 2008 Bond Allocations for the \$110 million and investment reports.

The NW property loan refinance was been completed today and locked in at 4.1%. The district was anticipating a 4.3% rate.

Superintendent Report

Superintendent Mikalson stated that it is clear we are facing difficult times and we have been collectively facing those realities all year. He has great hope in the process and outcomes. As of last Friday the classified association has agreed to a tentative agreement and will vote to ratify that agreement on Tuesday. The same proposal was brought forward to the administrative and confidential group. They have agreed to the proposal. The proposal includes reduction of six days from the next school year (same as this year), no cost of living adjustments, no step increase, no insurance cap increase, and no tuition reimbursement.

The above agreement is contingent on the state allocating an additional \$56 million in the second year of the biennium. The state set the \$56 million aside when they provided the initial education allocations. They have indicated that as long as the economy stays flat or doesn't decrease, the \$56 million would be allocated and divided between all school districts in the state. There is a possibility the money could be allocated in June or in February.

The district originally proposed a 49/51 split. Based on the \$56 million being distributed in the second year in the biennium, the district is now proposing a 50/50 split.

Superintendent Mikalson thanked the classified association for their partnership all year long as well as the REA for being at the table to continue the conversation.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that \$600,000 in administrative salaries have been cut from the district office since last May. "We are stretched thin just as much as everyone else." Shay provided a document that had three separate Board meeting schedule scenarios. The intent is to make sure we can balance the workload and to make sure the Board fulfills its obligation as well. He provided these documents for review and further discussion at the June 8 Board work session.

Jim Erickson stated he would like to get the schools input on what they would like to have happen as far as school visits. How do we get more parents at the listening sessions?

Cathy feels it is important that Paul Rodby be present for Superintendent Mikalson's evaluation. Superintendent Mikalson stated we are anticipating the results from the staff/parent/student survey next week. As soon as that data is available it will be forwarded to the Board and an executive session will be scheduled.

Association Reports

Judy Newman

- ✓ Thanked the Board for allowing the REA members to express their feelings
- ✓ Through the bargaining process it has become evident that not everyone agrees on how we reach consensus— we see things very different. We also have some philosophical differences on what should be the priorities. This has delayed the decision making process. With the information about additional funding coming in it makes her think that beginning in February with negotiations was too early
- ✓ They will get back to the district on June 6th regarding the latest proposal
- ✓ Judy asked when the survey results will be back and when the information will be provided to staff. Superintendent Mikalson stated this will be an annual process to compile data to continually improve. It is a nationally normed survey that will provide valuable information and will be used as part of his evaluation. Every employee will have access to survey results. Judy stated there was confusion about the survey and concern about the intent of the survey. They were confused about who they were evaluating.

Jim stated that he appreciates that it is nationally normed but also has concerns about the instrument used. As a Board they will determine if the survey provides the information they were looking for.

Dru Carpenter

- ✓ She emailed a copy of the MOU that will be voted upon on Tuesday. It clearly states the agreement is contingent on the \$56 million being allocated in the second year of the biennium. Shay expressed his appreciation to Dru for her leadership.

Jim expressed his appreciation to both Judy and Dru for their leadership during this process.

Cathy Miller requested that responses to the questions/concerns raised tonight be posted on the district website. She doesn't want anyone who spoke tonight to feel dismissed and it is critical that everyone knows they were heard.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that he and Mike McIntosh have gone to every employee three times; Budget 101, 201 and 301 to provide information and receive feedback. He does not feel that by referring them to the website that anyone is being dismissive of their concerns.

There was considerable conversation about posting responses to tonight's comments/concerns on the website or in an email to district staff.

Jim Erickson is not in favor of sending out a response to the issues brought up tonight. Those answers can be provided to association representatives and disseminated to their members as appropriate.

Paul Rodby spoke to the point that was made questioning the Board's support of teachers in response to the editorial in the Bend Bulletin. We have introduced publically many times that we appreciate what teachers bring to the table and add to the culture of the district. He would make a public statement now and an editorial back to the Bend Bulletin to make sure teachers know how the Board feels. "We need to continue to bring people together, that is what Shay has been trying to do all along." He believes it would be the right thing to do right now.

Jim Erickson disagrees that it is the Board's job to tell the editorial board they are wrong. He stated "All of us are dedicated to improving education and I honestly don't know what I am supposed to say or do if someone does not support teachers and education. We put the trust out to the teachers and we deserve the same in return. I am not judging anyone; that is the outcome that we need. The article was coming from an editorial point of view with an ax to grind. And, back at the district, we continue to do what is best for kids. I don't know what a public response should be."

Ric Little doesn't mind putting out a public statement from the Board. However, "It should be assumed that the Board would love to give everyone a raise, but that simply can't be done. The reason we ran for the school board is because we care about education." He doesn't feel compelled to submit anything to the newspaper.

Bob Perry expressed that teachers feel that "everyone is picking on them." All they are asking for the Board to do is tell the public that they are valued. "The Board has done a great job in telling staff they are appreciated but the public needs to hear it."

Paul Rodby stated that we need to market our successes and our teacher group. Though Superintendent Mikalson leadership we need to market that we are a cohesive group and we are all stuck in the middle of the financial crisis." The person who spoke to the Board about this showed a lot of courage.

Superintendent Mikalson stated that his only request is that in any acknowledgement of staff would support all members; certified, classified, confidential, and administrators.

Cathy Miller recommended that as a Board, in concert with the superintendent and both associations, they should draft a letter to the State stating that a permanent source of funding needs to be established for education. "This would be a cohesive attempt to change what is out of our control."

Jim stated the ideas that he isn't opposed to a common themed letter being sent out about how difficult it is to do education in this environment, but only after an agreement is reached with both associations. "That way we can be very specific on what it costs everyone and not just monetary considerations. At this point we don't know because we haven't come to an agreement about those issues."

Cathy Miller stated that in the emotion of tonight, "We need to be careful to not undermine the staff, superintendent, and negotiation process."

Request for Agenda Items

- Date to reschedule the work session on June 22
- Superintendent Evaluation – needs to be completed prior to Paul Rodby term on the Board expiring
- Action item on the ALO Evaluation

ADJOURN

Paul Rodby moved and Cathy Miller seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:30pm. Motion carried 4-0.

Jim Erickson, School Board Chair

Trish Huspek, Executive Assistant