

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Directors- Work Session/Local Contract Review Board
Tuesday, July 18, 2017- 1:00 p.m.
Newport High School- Room W19
Newport, Oregon

Minutes

PRESIDING: Ron Beck, Chairman

Present: Ron Beck, Chairman; Amanda Remund, Vice Chairman; Liz Martin, Karen Bondley, Jenny Demaris, Directors

Also Present: Tom Rinearson, Superintendent; Rich Belloni, Director of Support Services; Jon Zagel, Director/Principal; Pete Gintner, Attorney; Thad Call (associate of Mr. Gintner); Laurie Urquhart, Secretary

Call to Order- Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Beck convened the meeting and called the work session to order at 1:00 p.m. with a quorum of four board members present. (Director Bondley arrived at 1:19 p.m.) The board work session was recessed into a meeting of the Local Contract Review Board at 1:01 p.m.

Local Contract Review Board- Public Hearing

The LCSD Board, acting in its capacity as the Local Contract Review Board, conducted a public hearing to hear and take testimony on creation of an exemption from competitive bidding requirements for the seismic upgrades at Newport High School and Sam Case Elementary School.

Director of Support Services Rich Belloni reported the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) process was successfully used for the Toledo Jr./Sr. High project. Attorney Pete Gintner stated that LCSD is the "poster child" for using a method different from the low bidder method. "This process is tailor made for your type projects; Mr. Belloni has done this before successfully," he added.

The findings in support of the exemption state that "an alternative contracting process is unlikely to encourage favoritism or diminish competition, and that the process will result in substantial cost savings to the public agency." No comments were offered from the audience.

Director Martin asked if there are any local contractors interested; Mr. Belloni responded that he is unsure who may bid but that there are "a couple of local folks." If one of them was awarded the contract, they would employ local people.

Chairman Beck asked if there is contingency in the budget; Mr. Belloni replied that there is.

The Newport High upgrades could interfere with graduation ceremonies next June, though a contingency plan has been developed. The schedule for the Sam Case project is tight, which will require a trusted contractor, said Belloni.

Director Remund asked if the Toledo project was completed on time; it was, even though there were many potential areas that could have resulted in delays.

**Local Contract Review Board- Findings of Fact/
Exemption from Competitive Bidding**

Motion 17/18-1

On motion of Director Martin, seconded by Director Demaris, the Local Contract Review Board unanimously approved Findings in Fact in support of an exemption from competitive bidding for the Newport High/Sam Case seismic upgrades as contained in the 7/18/17 board folder.

**Local Contract Review Board- Request for Proposal
(RFP), Newport High/Sam Case Seismic Upgrades Project**

Motion 17/18-2

On motion of Director Demaris, seconded by Director Remund, the Local Contract Review Board unanimously approved the RFP for the Newport High/Sam Case Seismic Upgrades Project as distributed under separate cover.

The LCRB meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m., and the work session meeting was reconvened at approximately 1:17 p.m.

Director Bondley arrived at approximately 1:19 p.m.

Work Session, LCSD Board of Directors

Communication:

Policy BG delineates how communication should occur between the board the staff stating, "The Board desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the superintendent or designee." Mr. Rinearson urged board members to call either the superintendent or board secretary with questions, adding "It is imperative that everyone gets the same information."

He reminded board members that the school board is a governing and policy board whose role is to govern, not manage.

Director Martin commented on the lack of communication to the board over the last few years adding, "It is nice to have Tom back." The Superintendent asked board members

to consider, over the next couple of months, behaviors they would like to see in a new superintendent. He reminded them that there is already a policy about qualifications of the superintendent (Policy CBA), but the policy does not define the “how.”

If board members hear of a quote attributed to the Board Chair about which they have a question, Mr. Rinearson asked that the question be relayed to either the Chair or him. “Sometimes the person does not quote the Chairman correctly.” He added that a new Communications Coordinator will be starting employment with the district soon.

Board/Superintendent Working Agreements

The Superintendent noted the working agreements were developed several years ago to define the roles of the board and superintendent and how they work together. The agreements have been adjusted through the years. He directed attention to 1.1, “Focus on governance: policy-making, strategic planning, and evaluation (curriculum, district performance and superintendent).

He noted the Board has policies about most of these areas, and said Betsy Wilcox (Curriculum & Instruction Administrator) is reviewing policies to determine if district practices align with policies. “We will have recommendations around this, and hope to end up with flow charts describing it,” said Rinearson.

Superintendent Rinearson stated the process surrounding the adoption of new or revised policies is changing due to changing personnel. “I want to be sure we have a good process for policies to retain the organizational knowledge. This will be important over the next year, as much of the institutional knowledge retires.”

1.3 of the working agreements speaks to the role of the chair to speak for the board to the press and public groups. Chairman Beck noted his recent role in speaking for the board since it related to the (previous) superintendent. Mr. Rinearson responded that the board has the ability to “pull the rope” (ask to stop the process) if they see something going awry. “The Chair would stop speaking on the issue and call a meeting for the board to discuss.” It may or may not fit into an allowable executive session statute. Director Martin asked when board members might take this kind of action; the Superintendent replied “whenever you think it.”

Mr. Rinearson stated that if something unusual occurs, the Board/Superintendent Secretary sometimes contacts board members for him, on his behalf.

Chairman Beck said, with the recent situation, a complaint was never received by the board. The Superintendent replied that rumors were circulating so the board had to investigate- to protect the employee as well as the district.

Director Remund suggested learning about hiring processes when asked about possible topics for the work session. That subject will be covered during an ‘education session’ (work session) prior to the September 12 regular session.

Regarding written communications from patrons, Director Martin said she would like to know that letters or emails the board receives are answered. (These communications are sent to the superintendent's office.) Although this occurred in the past, it may not have happened over the last few years.

Number seven of the agreements states in part that at least two board members must ask to place items on the agenda. Many items are of a pro forma nature; this speaks to topics other than regular items. Most agendas are set by the chair and vice chair in consultation with the superintendent. If either the chair or vice chair cannot attend the meeting, the board reached consensus that the agenda could be set by the board officer attending and the superintendent.

Number 16 refers to group emails sent to the board; the board should not send a group response to any email. This could constitute deliberation and is not allowed outside of a board meeting.

Number 17 states the board will "Rely on the superintendent to inform the board of all critical information...". Chairman Beck stated he assumed this was occurring with the former superintendent, "but it was not," said Beck. Director Martin asked how 'critical information' is defined. Director Demaris stated that could be a question for a superintendent interview ("What do you consider to be critical information?")

Mr. Rinearson noted the agreement to "Communicate with one another should an issue or problem develop between members." He said board members could call OSBA for help if the issue is not resolved by one member talking to another. "It may be the difference between a high talker and a low talker. Low talkers talk in whole sentences. High talkers don't mind another high talker finishing their sentences. We obviously have two high talkers on the board. Maybe just having these kinds of communications recognized will help."

Board members suggested minor changes to some items listed; the agreements will be presented for further discussion at the August 8th meeting.

Director Demaris suggested the Superintendent meet with representatives of public health to improve communication between the two agencies. Director Martin encouraged meetings with Oregon Coast Community College to improve communication with that entity.

Overview of LCSD Current Strategic Plan

Superintendent Rinearson suggested that with all of the changes next year, a revised strategic plan be developed for the new leaders. Chairman Beck asked how this fits with what the three administrators (Van Liew, Zagel and Tucker) are doing. Mr. Rinearson replied they are trying to determine what the district is missing, and suggested the board set about three goals, with objectives (what activities, who is

responsible and a timeline). The new superintendent could then be tasked with providing quarterly or six-month updates to check in with the board. “This builds in accountability,” said Rinearson.

He asked the board to think about what goals board members want for the district over the next two years. Director Remund noted this exercise could assist with hiring a new superintendent as well.

Chairman Ron Beck noted with the current board goal, the board sought to support the accomplishment of the goal (“By 2018, all LCSD schools will be performing at or above the state average, as measured by the Oregon Department of Education.”) Director Bondley said she thought, “We’ve done a good job with this one.”

Mr. Rinearson noted there is no formal implementation side, or a process to review the goal. Director Martin expressed her appreciation of principals’ presentations at board meetings regarding the school improvement plans and where they stood at that moment in time with regard to their accomplishment of their plan.

The superintendent noted the district would change next year, with the large change in personnel at the district office. He said it might take a year to understand what ‘right size’ is, regarding the number of district office staff and administrators.

Director Demaris said she felt the current strategic plan document is hard to track, with no comparison between the goals. She suggested adding a category: what is the goal’s functionality? She said formatting is the issue, and said there are three different ways to use the information with three different audiences.

Mr. Rinearson said the three goals in the strategic plan are fairly standard. (They are: “We will build on our strengths: 1) to improve student achievement at all levels and all populations; 2) to improve student and district climate for students, staff and community; and 3) to promote an efficient and responsive district organization.” He said the need for facilities might be a good addition as a fourth goal, as the district has space issues and “some buildings are tired.”

He suggested formulating some triggers, e.g. what is the trigger to re-open the Arcadia building as a school? Where is the growth of student population? If the district seeks another bond in about eight years, space to add classrooms could be part of it.

Chairman Beck said in the short term, nothing is slated to change. The middle and long-range timeframe will need plans developed.

Board members discussed the ability of principals to make decisions about their buildings. In past years, some principals did not take ownership for certain decisions, saying edicts came from the district office. “The pendulum has swung back from where it was,” said the Superintendent.

Director Beck remembered a time when the west area principals came together to formulate the best K-12 plan for the area. Mr. Zagel added that every area did that. Over the last couple of years, decisions were made centrally and much was locked on staffing sheets (thus providing fewer decisions for principals to make).

Mr. Rinearson said there is power in allowing principals to work in regional teams. By doing so one year, the district was able to add eleven more teachers district wide. "Staffs were involved in the decision making." Now, said Rinearson, both unions have stated, "All we want is a voice."

Mr. Beck noted the importance of honesty, for instance when mistakes of one sort or another are made. "If the business office makes a mistake, Julie brings it forward along with a solution." The superintendent noted that is a healthy way to do business.

Superintendent Rinearson suggested retaining the same categories in the strategic plan and possibly adding a fourth goal around facilities, but putting it into a database so the data can be manipulated. These are district goals. Board goals can either focus on ways the board can help achieve district goals, or can be goals for the board to accomplish (i.e., hiring a superintendent). Director Demaris noted her preference for tactical, measureable goals.

Superintendent Succession

Mr. Rinearson said the "three musketeers" have paused their work for now due to vacations, and getting ready for school to start. He suggested the board hire "someone who knows how to manage the organization, not someone particularly skilled in one area" (e.g. curriculum).

Chairman Beck surmised that hiring a "headhunter may not be the best way to go, but may be the one we choose. Do we want to do the process ourselves? Look internally? Both external and internal? Target external folks?" Mr. Rinearson reminded the board that the timeframe of hiring a superintendent is usually January.

The superintendent stated that the advantage of a headhunter is their network, and said there may be a way to pay a fee to access their network. There are only two firms that serve in this capacity in our part of the country: Greg McKenzie's firm and George Murdock's. Mr. Rinearson said that Clackamas School District did a national search but ended up recruiting in-state people.

Director Demaris stated she is comfortable with not using a headhunter. The superintendent suggested that a database of all the superintendents in Oregon be created, then a letter sent to each of them asking for five names of possible candidates. He said he would be meeting with former board member Jean Turner about mentoring board members and helping with the superintendent search. "She and I could do the pre-screening. I suggest you have a community group to review the applications; this

group could include principals.” He suggested that community meetings be held during the process.

Chairman Beck wondered how interview questions could be more interactive, yet ask the same question of each candidate. Mr. Rinearson said the first interview should be a strict construct, with the second more relaxed.

Director Martin said she is “a little skittish about the process,” and said she likes the work the three administrators are doing in telling the story of LCSD to determine what is needed before the superintendent search process starts. Mr. Rinearson commented, “Even if you have a great process, you may make the wrong choice. Then the question is how to address any shortcomings.” He added that if the process had continued in the last search, the board might have reached another conclusion.

The Superintendent noted there might be viable internal candidates; one idea to consider is having co-superintendents. Director Demaris noted the county commissioners use a similar system. Mr. Rinearson said the viability or interest of internal candidates should become clear by December. One benefit of an internal candidate or candidates is the retention of organizational knowledge. “In late fall, if we decide to go with inside candidates and go through some sort of application process, the applicant(s) could be hired in December. Then they could be involved in building the budget and hiring the new secretary to the Superintendent/Board.”

Chairman Beck wondered if a structure could be viable with four area leaders (“Regional Administrators”) and one superintendent. “You could put the charter schools under the east person since that student population is lower.” The Superintendent said this could work with the right superintendent, though much of the work of the school district must be the same between areas (human resources, business office functions, special education, etc.).

Mr. Rinearson stated that he decentralized decision making when he was here the first time. “I feel that if you want to have power, give it away.” He said the concept is interesting and he would ponder and flesh it out. He noted one concern would be that a principal would be evaluating other principals.

Director Demaris stated her feeling that this concept creates more of an equal voice for parents. Mr. Rinearson said it would take time for this model to become viable, and said it would be difficult to identify a superintendent from outside the organization to lead it.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Chairman

Superintendent