

**Preliminary Business**

**Call To Order**

Board Chair Pam Glenn called the Regular September Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Visiting Delegations**

Chair Glenn welcomed guests and asked them to introduce themselves. Guests present were; Nicholle Arnoldus, Peter Benjamin, Kristen Kruse, Sarah Lucas, Tim and Jenny Phelps, Brian Sather, and Drew Williams.

**Agenda Items**

**Public Comment**

Brian Sather asked to present a statement addressing some concerns he had regarding communication from the school. He stated he felt communication has gotten less personal over the years and most recently is mostly “robo-calls.” His primary complaint was communication surrounding a recent athletic decision regarding his daughter which he explained to the Board. He also expressed concern regarding the fact that he had been unable to reach anyone at the school at 1:00 pm on Friday after school was released to discuss his concerns. He left a phone message and later sent an email.

He highlighted other areas he felt were “communication barriers” in the event a parent needs to contact the school after hours: 1) Administrators cell numbers are not listed on the district web site; 2) His phone call was not returned until Monday; 3) He did not receive an email response for days and 4) School board members’ contact information is not readily available.

Mr. Sather questioned the reasoning behind the decision to not allow his daughter to quit volleyball in order to participate in cross country and explained his reasons why he felt it was an unfair decision. Mr. Sather continued to explain why he felt it was important to allow the athletes the flexibility to choose what is best for them. He submitted his written statement for public record.

Superintendent Hislop addressed Mr. Sather and informed him that he and Mr. Mills visited first thing the following Monday morning and made the decision that his daughter could participate in cross country. He noted that he had made attempts to contact him by phone and email with no response. Mr. Mills reported that he had attempted to gather information to resolve the issue from the two coaches over the weekend and was unable to contact the cross country coach. Mr. Hislop also stated that the district has been short staffed which has led to holes left to be filled.

Mr. Sather stated that a quicker response to the issue regarding his daughter would have helped the situation but indicated that they have had concerns over lack of communication in the past as well. He felt his daughter was penalized for quitting volleyball to participate in cross country.

Mr. Mills stated that, although it is not in the handbook, there has been a general understanding that athletes cannot quit a sport mid-season to transfer to another sport. Mr. Sather asked that this be made clear to parents. Discussion turned to the timeline of the implementation of the cross country program and hiring of the coach.

**Union County School District #11**  
**September 21, 2021**  
**Board Minutes - Page 2**

**Consent Agenda**

Following a few questions regarding a couple of payments, Joe Fisher moved to approve the minutes and bills paid. Ken Patterson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Reports**

**IMESD Talking Points**

Superintendent Hislop read the InterMountain ESD Report which highlighted Nate Bingaman's message that he presented at the August board meeting. The purpose of his testimony was to encourage administration to consider the effects the pandemic has had on students. Nate urged the administration and board to be firm in following state guidelines in order to maintain in-person instruction for students. He also asked that they continue to advocate for school activities.

**Transportation/Maintenance Report**

Drew Williams reported that, due to one bus being out of commission, the school year has been off to a rough start. Mr. Williams noted that he has requested three bids for a new 14 passenger bus. He has received two bids and no response from the third vendor. The bus purchase was later discussed under action items.

**Principal/Activity Report**

Mr. Mills reported that high school enrollment is currently 142. Ninth grade is the largest with 29 and the smallest class is the seniors with 20. We have 13 new students including a foreign exchange student from Germany. He noted that there are currently 17 students on quarantine along with three staff members.

Mr. Mills commended the secretaries for their continuous work with contact tracing and quarantine dates. They have been working with the school nurse to ensure limited exposure for our students. With the shortage of substitutes, staff members are covering where they can for staff members who are absent. He noted everyone is doing what they can to make things as normal as possible for the students.

It was reported that the 7<sup>th</sup> graders worked with Mr. Cant, Mr. McGilvray, the Grand Ronde Model Water Shed and the Confederate Tribes of the Umatilla, Cayuse and Nez Peirce on a community science project.

Mr. Mills reported that the junior high football team is currently on quarantine and the high school team was released from quarantine a week ago. The volleyball team is currently in first place in league and working hard to avoid being placed on quarantine. The junior high volleyball team is having a good year but missed a few games due to the facts their opponents were on quarantine. Cross Country has had meets in Union and at Wallowa Lake. Their next meet is on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the Baker golf course.

**Union County School District #11**  
**September 21, 2021**  
**Board Minutes - Page 3**

**Superintendent Report**

Superintendent Hislop reported that the district had received a Farm to Child grant in the amount of \$1,665. These funds must be spent on Oregon food/dairy products. As part of the ESSER III requirements, our Ready School Safe Learners Plan has been posted on the website for community review and input. He reported that he has been working to obtain a grant for the purchase of an electric bus through the VW Grant. He will have more information at the next meeting regarding the progress of this grant process. It was reported that staff has been asked to submit their proof of vaccine or an exception form by October 11<sup>th</sup>. The state deadline is October 18<sup>th</sup>.

Superintendent Hislop reported that the current elementary enrollment is 144. He noted that he has been in every classroom and has been very impressed with how the start of the school year is going. He gave a few examples of the technology being used in the classrooms.

**Old Business**

**Grant Funds**

Superintendent Hislop reported that there is a lot of latitude in the use of SIA funds. This will allow the district to free up general fund dollars in order to set aside for future building projects. ESSER II funds must be spent by June 2023 and ESSER II funds by June of 2024.

**Action Items**

**Approve Bus Purchase**

Superintendent Hislop reported that two bids were received for a new 14 passenger bus. The bids were compared and Superintendent Hislop and Drew Williams recommended the approval of the bid from Western Bus in the amount of \$64,581. Ken Patterson moved to approve the bid from Western Bus and Jason Beck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Staff Hiring**

Superintendent Hislop recommended the hiring of Katie Burrignt to fill the vacant First Grade Teacher position. He stated that he felt very fortunate to have an applicant as qualified as her especially so close to the start of school. He noted that she had come very highly recommended. Jason Beck moved to approve the hiring of Katie Burrignt. Kaiger Braseth seconded the motion. Pam Glenn abstained from the vote which was unanimously passed.

Superintendent Hislop recommended the hiring of Talia Whitmore as Paraprofessional I. Talia has worked as a paraprofessional at La Grande School District and also comes highly recommended. Joe Fisher moved to approve the hiring of Talia Whitmore. Jason Beck seconded the motion, Pam Glenn abstained from the vote which passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, Pam Glenn asked if there were any comments from those in attendance. Sarah Lucas expressed concern regarding the change in the high school dress code. She expressed concerns with some of the attire she has seen students wearing and asked that the board and administration review the dress code for future school years. Mr. Mills stated that the previous

**Union County School District #11**  
**September 21, 2021**  
**Board Minutes - Page 4**

language was removed to match other area schools' handbook language. He noted that in recent years it has been difficult to enforce the strict dress code language as many parents do not encourage their students to comply. Discussion turned to the elementary dress code and consistency of enforcement at both levels. Peter Benjamin expressed concerns regarding consistency and enforcement surrounding various issues along with poor communication. He asked that the administration provide improved communication and consistency of enforcement on what is currently in the handbook. Discussion turned to the enforcement of the current mask mandate. In closing, Mr. Benjamin thanked the administration and Board for their efforts and acknowledged it is a difficult time in education. Kristen Kruse also expressed her appreciation to the board and administration for their services.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

**Members Present**

Jason Beck, Kaiger Braseth (virtual), Joe Fisher, Pam Glenn and Ken Patterson.

**Others Present**

Doug Hislop, Superintendent; Michael Mills, Principal and Teressa Dewey, Deputy Clerk (virtual).

---

Chairman

---

Deputy Clerk