

SHERMAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 20, 2012

The Board of Directors of Sherman County School District met in a Special Session in the Sherman County Junior Senior High Public/School Library in Moro, OR on November 20, 2012. The following were present: Chair, Ken Melzer, Members, Bill Martin, Ted von Borstel, Liz Mills, Superintendent, Wes Owens, Principals, Mike Somnis and Brandon Hammond, Secretary, Linda Burnett, Staff, Gerald Casper, Janet Pinkerton, Jeanie Pehlke, Kalie Rolfe, Cindie King, and Visitors, Jaclyn McCurdy, Latrelle Smoot, Nell Melzer, Vivian Rolfe, Allison Rolfe, Chris Kaseberg, and Steve Kaseberg.

SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Member Bill Martin that the District make a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro. **Second** by Member Liz Mills. **Question:** Chair Ken Melzer pointed out the fact that the Nov. 20, 2012 date helped the Board concentrate their energy on this decision, and there should be a completion date for the plan included in the motion. The rest of the Board agreed with that suggestion. Superintendent Owens agreed there should be a date for completion of the plan. He believes an achievable date for completion of the plan would be July 8, 2013. Member Ted von Borstel felt that might be a little quick for such a comprehensive plan. Superintendent Owens pointed out that date could always be extended, but would be a good target date to begin with. **Amended Motion by** Member Ted von Borstel: By July 8, 2013, a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro will be completed. This will include the organization of a Facilities Planning Committee consisting of Staff, Parents, Community Members, Board Members, and Administration. **Second to the amended motion by** Member Liz Mills. **Action:** The amended motion carried unanimously.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Ken Melzer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag at 6:30 PM. He apologized for Board Member Verna Simantel's absence, and explained that she would be included in the meeting by phone during the Board Discussion.

TIMELINE LEADING UP TO NOVEMBER 20, 2012 DECISION

Mr. Owens presented a Consolidation Decision Timeline, discussing events that have led to this date as a time to make a decision whether to develop a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro or to continue with current configuration.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

Chair Ken Melzer opened the meeting to Comments from Visitors:

1. Latrelle Smoot: Gave a history of the building at Grass Valley, and expressed his concern about leaving such a nice building and spending the money to build a new K - 12 facility. He feels it would be a bad decision to walk away from the building with no promise of a new use for the facility.
2. Nell Melzer: Expressed her understanding of what a difficult decision the Board has to make.
3. Latrelle Smoot: Gave his history of Budget Committee, and understanding of cuts that had to be made.
4. Member Ted von Borstel: Explained the new building plan would only be K – 6, not a complete K – 12 facility.

BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Chair, Ken Melzer explained this decision, if made, will be only to make a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro and report these findings to the Sherman County Community. Building, if that is the decision made, will not begin immediately. Member Verna Simantel was reached by phone in order to join in the Board Discussion.

1. Chair, Ken Melzer: Gave a brief history on past budget cuts, and defined small school adjustment funds. Before closing Wasco Elementary the School District received small school adjustment funds for North and South Elementary Schools. State Legislation allowed us to continue to receive the North Elementary small school adjustment funds for a period of three years after merging both elementary schools to Grass Valley. Those Funds are no longer available to the District. He also explained that if we decide to make a plan to consolidate, the plan that will be structured will include a planning committee, financial studies, etc. He explained some of the advantages of having one building and the fact that traveling staff would be available in one building all day, every day. He feels the students would benefit educationally, as well as benefit by the reduction in time spent on the bus, and there would be cost savings in facility operations.
2. Bill Martin: Reviewed past consolidations, diminishing student population, need for funds to operate, need to find ways to fund our operations in a more efficient manner. He feels we would be able to address these needs by making a plan toward consolidation. He feels that with the SIP dollars, we have the opportunity to build, should the plan lead us toward that.

3. Liz Mills: Said she didn't hear the community say no we should not formulate a plan. She feels we should develop a plan, and let the plan tell us what we need to do.
4. Ted von Borstel: Addressed some problem areas: SIP Dollars, Bond Issue (he is not in support of that), the need to do the best we can for our kids, and then expressed his desire to see the District use at least half of the SIP dollars toward bettering education, and perhaps use half toward the building plan. He also expressed his concern that we need to include more gym space in the plan. Chair, Ken Melzer asked Ted to remember that all of these things would be a part of the plan, should we decide to make that plan.
5. Verna Simantel: Feels it is our (the Board's) responsibility to give our kids the best education we can. She feels that because we have the SIP funds available, we need to work through a plan toward consolidation. She is in favor of this District making a plan to consolidate K – 12 in Moro. Chair, Ken Melzer thanked Member Simantel for her participation and explained to her that because she is not here, the board decided she will not be included in the vote.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion by Member Bill Martin that the District make a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro. **Second** by Member Liz Mills. **Question:** Chair Ken Melzer pointed out the fact that the Nov. 20, 2012 date helped the Board concentrate their energy on this decision, and there should be a completion date for the plan included in the motion. The rest of the Board agreed with that suggestion. Superintendent Owens agreed there should be a date for completion of the plan. He believes an achievable date for completion would be July 8, 2013. Member Ted von Borstel felt that might be a little quick for such a comprehensive plan. Superintendent Owens pointed out that date could always be extended, but would be a good target date to begin with. **Amended Motion by** Member Ted von Borstel: By July 8, 2013, a comprehensive plan to consolidate the District to one campus in Moro will be completed. This will include the organization of a Facilities Planning Committee consisting of Staff, Parents, Community Members, Board Members, and Administration. **Second to the amended motion by** Member Liz Mills. **Action:** The amended motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATION RELEASE TO PUBLIC

Chair Ken Melzer explained that Mr. Owens had drafted a press release to be published regarding the decision made tonight. Mr. Owens pointed out that he and Chair Ken Melzer had drafted two press releases. One draft release included the decision to make a comprehensive plan for consolidation, and the second draft press release was written to be used if the Board voted not to make the decision to make a comprehensive plan for consolidation. The press release drafted, once approved by the Board, would be released to the media, and to any

public interested in that communication. The Board reviewed the drafted press release, and offered suggestions to be included in that release. Chris Kaseberg questioned the wording of the motion; wondering if the plan includes the option of leaving the configuration as it is. The Board discussed the motion, and left it as amended. Mr. Owens read the draft press release for those present to hear. Member Ted von Borstel thanked the public for their input. Latrelle Smoot questioned Member Ted von Borstel about his earlier discussion of funding. Member Ted von Borstel explained that he personally could not support going out for a bond. He also explained that the District has SIP funds in savings right now, and will receive more money in November. He believes those dollars are guaranteed funds. Latrelle Smoot believes SIP dollars are disappearing, and Federal Monies will not be available in the next few years. Chair Ken Melzer explained there are many ways to fund building another K – 6 building/structure, and that will be a part of the plan.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS RELATED TO NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No comments were given at this time.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Member Bill Martin and Member Liz Mills offered thanks to Ken Melzer for his efforts in this process.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. Owens suggested each board member come to the December meeting with ideas they would like addressed in order to begin and facilitate this plan.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Ken Melzer adjourned the meeting at 7:36 PM

Chair, Ken Melzer

Secretary, Linda Burnett