

## SWEET HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 55

Sweet Home, Oregon

*Board Chairman Jason Redick called the **regular meeting** of the board of Directors of Sweet Home School District No. 55 to order at 6:30 p.m. on September 14, 2020.*

---

**Board Members in Attendance** Jason Redick, Chanz Keeney, Mike Reynolds, Jenny Daniels, Debra Brown, Jason Van Eck, Jim Gourley, Dale Keene Absent: Joseph Kennedy

### **Staff Members in Attendance**

Superintendent: Tom Yahraes; Administrators: Colleen Henry, Kevin Strong, Rachel Stucky, Ralph Brown Certified; Kristin Adams, Ryan Adams, Josh Darwood, Elizabeth Hunt (ZOOM) Classified: none; Board Recording Secretary: Julie Emmert

### **Other Attendance**

Kelly Kenoyer, representing *the New Era*, Blair Larson, Mike Adams, Shannon Lowery, Ray Lowery and other High School parents

## **2. Appointed New Board Member – Position #6 – Crawfordsville**

Chairman Redick introduced candidates Blair Larson and Dale Keene and explained the process that the board would be using to appoint the new board member. The board officers selected four questions. Each applicant had a chance to go first or lead off, and each applicant had a chance to follow up. Board members asked follow up or clarifying questions:

### **Board members ask questions:**

- 1) *Tell us a little about yourself and why you are interested in filling the open school board seat. Blair Larson answered first – Dale Keene answered second*
- 2) *What particular strengths will you bring to this school board? Dale Keene answered First – Blair Larson answered second*
- 3) *What do you believe are the greatest challenges currently facing this school district? Blair Larson answered first – Dale Keene answered second*
- 4) *What is your vision of an outstanding school district? Dale Keene answered First – Blair Larson answered second*

Board members voted and Board Secretary, Julie Emmert, tallied the votes and gave to chairman Redick. Dale Keene had majority of votes.

**Dale Keene was sworn in as a new board member position #6 Crawfordsville**

## **3. Agenda Approval/Changes**

Chairman Redick called for changes and/or approval of the agenda.

***Motion No. 20-40: Board Member Jim Gourley moved to approve the agenda as presented. Board Member Mike Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

**4. Public Comments:** Shannon Towery regarding College programs in the district. Would like to see more options for students that are excelling by offering college courses. Would like the district to look at the College Bound Option and also look at our board policies that refer to this option.

## **5. Personnel Reports/Comments**

**A. Certified & Classified Representatives – Elizabeth Hunt**

**B. Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Tom Yahraes shared the following:**

1. Enrollment

- Under COVID-19 conditions, districts are faced with significant declining enrollment challenges across the state and nation. Two major factors:
  - 1) Competing fortune 500 online schools with professional marketing departments are heavily recruiting students.
  - 2) Without a brick and mortar option and buses driving by homes, the regular “triggers” aren't there to motivate some students and families to attend school; hence, enrollment suffers.

Comparing our 4-year total enrollment numbers, at this point we are about 120 to 180 students lower. Impact: if we don't recoup these students, it not only affects student learning, it also impacts funding for academic programming.

The district will continue to work hard to reach families and students to explain our options:

- We have distance learning through Canvas and Odyssey, and we just purchased K-12 learning modules. Soon the district is hoping to have our in-person (onsite) learning option up and running too, given we meet all the safety metrics for the state and county.

2. State & County Re-opening Metric Update

- Overall good news was released last week from the Oregon Health Authority. The State and Linn County numbers in cases per 100,000 and test positivity rates were equal to or the lowest they have been since the Governor started the tracking system the week of July 26.
- Grades 4-12 Metrics: First the bad news. At the state and Linn County level, we are not under the 10 cases per 100,000 mark to allow grades K-(4-12) to come back. The good news: at the state and county level, we met test positivity standards by being 5% and under. Keep in mind these numbers must be met for 3 weeks in a row. We along with much of the state, have a way to go.
- Grades K-3: Good news: At the state and county level, we are under 30 cases per 100,000 and 5% and under test positivity rate three weeks in a row. As a reminder, to give our students, families, staff, and community a consistent direction and out of an abundance of caution, Superintendent Yahraes told the community we would begin to look at bringing students back to in-person learning around the six-week mark. This puts us around the week of October 9<sup>th</sup>. If we continue to meet metrics, we will systematically and safely begin to provide onsite/in-person learning, while providing a distance-learning option to students and families. More information to come.

3. Limited Onsite Learning Preparations

- Our Chief Academic Officer Rachel Stucky provided a report on how we are planning to utilize this option under the ODE Ready Safety School guidelines. This provision allows us to bring small groups of students back to school pre-mid-October.

4. Opening Operations Video

- We had a video planned. Due to a myriad of hazardous environmental events that hit our school, community, and many employees, all under the umbrella of COVID we had to throw out.

### **Here's a snapshot of the week:**

- **Tuesday:** Extreme weather warning: 10 to 50 mph wind gusts and fires in and outside of Sweet Home. Chromebook distributions was canceled and as Sweet Home's air quality deteriorated and Sweet Home went into level one emergency; employees were released.
- **Wednesday:** Smokey conditions and surrounding fire. Chromebook distributions were canceled and allowed employees to work onsite, from home, or attend to their households under duress. By late morning the air quality was very poor in our buildings. We closed buildings and sent employees home. Shortly after this time, Holley area went from level two to three quickly. The Linn County Sheriff's Office set up a temporary command center at Holley School. Superintendent Yahraes met briefly with the command center and offered keys to the school and all-district property in Sweet Home to help folks. Their preference regarding the use of Sweet Home District properties was to move evacuating folks more west—to get clear of the hazards. They thanked us for our hospitality.
- **Wednesday Afternoon:** After consulting with the Police Chief, Superintendent Yahraes canceled school due to a host of environmental issues (i.e. air quality). Some families/employees needed time to deal with the hazards on their property.
- **Thursday:** In the morning Superintendent Yahraes reviewed the status of the environmental conditions. The status was not sufficiently better. Although there was some better news from the Holley region, they were still level three. I sent clarity to students/families using the remind app and FB that the Grab and Go and Chrome pickups were canceled and we would kick off the start of the year Monday. Early afternoon, after consulting with the Police Chief, principals, and a variety of staff, he deemed it prudent to give all employees flexible plans for Friday: work from school, home, or attend to the needs of their particular situation. Admin teams attended to buildings and made plans to roll out canvas and Chromebooks for Monday.
- Expecting roll out to be this Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

Jason Redick asked what we are doing with the missing days and how are we making this up. ODE is working on this to help give us direction. The district has met in all areas of instructional time requirements.

#### 5. Policy, ORS and Waiver to Expanded Options

- Kristen Adams, our High School Success Coordinator, Principal Brown and Assistant Principal Nate Tyler presented our dual credit programs. The High School team presented a powerpoint with this information.
- Ray Towery spoke up and questioned the program we have compared to the Lebanon School District.

#### 6. SHEA Tort Claim Notice

Superintendent Yahraes reported that the district received a Tort Notice from the Teacher's Association.

### **6. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approved minutes from the from August 10, 2020 School Board Meeting
- B. Approved Leave of Absence for Marty Steinbock, Sweet Home Jr. High for the 2020-2021 school year effective immediately

- C. Approved hire of Joanne Viner, Special Ed Teacher at Oak Heights Elementary effective August 31, 2020
- D. Approved hire of Brittanie Sorensen, Title 1 Teacher at Oak Heights Elementary effective August 31, 2020
- E. Approved hire of Pamela Hayes, Temporary Kindergarten Teacher at Hawthorne Elementary effective August 31, 2020
- F. Approved hire of Daphnie Collins, Temporary Title Teacher at Hawthorne Elementary effective September 2, 2020
- G. Approved hire of Shayna Kennedy, Temporary 5/6 Teacher at Oak Heights Elementary effective August 31, 2020
- H. Approved hire of Bailey Bronson, Temporary Language Arts Teacher at the Sweet Home Jr. High effective August 31, 2020
- I. Approved hire of Jennifer Ashcraft, .25 Temporary TOSA: Instructional Technology Teacher in the district effective September 2, 2020

***Motion No. 20-41: Board Member Mike Reynolds, moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Board Member Jason Van Eck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

**7. Information/Discussion**

- A. Budget Update/Safety Information/Bond Update/Work Share  
Budget: Year to date spending is stable with an increase of \$5,968. Due to recent storm/fire damage property insurance premiums are up. Revenues – enrollment drives our funding, even though we are down the state will use last year’s enrollment.  
Safety: There were no recordable incidents for the month of August.
- B. Facilities Update: Josh Darwood gave a report on the work done at Jr. High. Working on the art room, and repairing the rain damage that we had last year. Mr. Darwood also gave a report on COVID items purchased; shields for classrooms, masks etc.

**8. Action Items: NONE**

**9. Board Comments:** Chanz Keeney expressed his desire to have kids back in school.

**10. Late Items –** No late items

**11. Future Agenda Items**

- A. Next Board Officers Meeting October 5, 2020 at 3:30 in the Superintendent’s Office
- B. Next Board Meeting October 12, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in DO Board Room

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

**13. Returned to Open Session at 9:28 p.m.**

***Motion No. 20-42: Board Member Mike Reynolds, moved to approve the Certified MOU as presented. Board Member Jason Van Eck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Motion No. 20-43: Board Member Mike Reynolds, moved to approve the Classified MOU as presented. Board Member Dale Keene seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

**Closed Session at 9:30 p.m.**

---

*Signature, Board Chairman* Julie Emmert, Board Recording Secretary  
(This meeting was also recorded and saved supt/board/audio)