

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 47J  
1201 TEXAS AVENUE  
VERNONIA OR 97064

BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

September 28, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER:** A Workshop of the Board of Directors of Administrative School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 8:42 a.m. by Stacey Pelster.

MEETING CALLED  
TO ORDER

**Board Present:** Stacey Pelster, Susan Wagner, Steve Whiteman, Jeana Gump, Brittanie Roberts, and Melissa Zavales,

BOARD PRESENT

**Board Absent:** Greg Kintz

BOARD ABSENT

**Staff Present:** Aaron Miller, Superintendent; and Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant.

STAFF PRESENT

**Visitors Present:** Steve Kelley, OSBA.

VISITORS

**OSBA Training with Steve Kelley:**

OSBA TRAINING

**Introductions:** Steve Kelley introduced himself and asked the Board to provide information about themselves in the following areas:

INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- What is your day job?
- How long have you been on the Board?
- What was your motivation for becoming a Board member?

Steve Kelley shared that he has been with OSBA for 4.5 years. He previously spent 36+ years in education retiring as a Superintendent. He initially went into education to coach. Kids are his passion and feels he can impact kids all over the State through OSBA.

QUESTIONS FROM  
THE BOARD

**Questions from the Board:** These were requested to help drive the conversation.

- Susan Wagner: Why not do a search ourselves?
- Steve Whiteman: Is there a "best time" to go through the search process?
- Melissa Zavales: Is it wrong to request a candidate have rural experience or a number of year of Supt. experience?
- Brittanie Roberts: Are there difficulties in getting someone for a District like Vernonia? Is there a way to get someone to stay longer in a District than the average few years? Is there training options or funding availability to be able to have two Superintendent's at the same time for training purposes/transition.

Mr. Kelley stated that he will address the above questions throughout his presentation.

**Search Options:** There are two options to hire a Superintendent Search company in Oregon. OSBA and Next Up Leadership which is run by Greg McKenzie, formerly with OSBA. OSBA and Next Up Leadership work together. There are also national companies as an option.

SEARCH OPTIONS

Steve Kelley handed out a sample calendar for a Superintendent search followed by discussion.

**Requirements before Search can Begin:** There are 3 things that must be done before entering into an executive session to start a Superintendent search.

REQUIREMENTS  
BEFORE SEARCH  
BEGINS

1. In a public meeting, the Board must declare a vacancy as of a certain day by a motion and a vote.
2. In a public meeting, the Board must approve a time line and/or calendar detailing the search parameters, by a motion and a vote. The sample provided is appropriate for this.
3. Develop and then adopt in a public meeting the Qualities and Qualifications (Qs & Qs) desired for potential Supt. candidates by a motion and a vote.

Qs and Qs are developed by holding community meetings in person as well as offer an online survey to interview as many stake holders as possible by asking three questions:

1. What is the strength of the District/Community (this will go in all marketing materials).
2. What are the challenges of the District/Community (this guides how OSBA looks at applications and helps with interview question development)
3. What are Qs and Qs you want in the next Supt.? This question comes to the Board – what are you looking for in the next Superintendent? If the Board wants rural experience, this would go in this area. Mr. Kelley

recommends saying “preferred” instead of “required” so as not to limit potential applicants. It is important to keep it as broad as possible and not add limits. This would be the same for a request that an applicant lives in the community.

**Candidate Application Timeline:** The job vacancy position will be open for 8 weeks preferably between end of December/first part of January through mid to late February. The new Superintendent would start July 1<sup>st</sup>. It is possible to have a successful search with a late start (Spring time), however in this instance perhaps the Board might consider going with an Interim for the next year, giving adequate time to conduct a full search. A question was asked if candidates visit communities on their own. According to Mr. Kelley, yes.

CANDIDATE  
APPLICATION  
TIMELINE

**Screening Committee:** This committee is generally between 10 and 15 additional people beyond the Board and Board Secretary. The additional people on the committee generally consist of elementary, middle, high, and administrative staff as well as community members. It is important to identify the composition of the committee beforehand. Confidentiality is critical of those on the screening committee as they are part of executive sessions.

SCREENING  
COMMITTEE

There are two ways to create a Screening Committee:

1. By appointment – Board members will make recommendations to the Board Chair and they make the appointments.
2. Application Process – Mr. Kelley recommends this option. He would help put this together. This process is more transparent and happens in a public meeting. Discussion was held on the uncomfortableness of appointing individuals in a public meeting. According to Mr. Kelley, it can be, but is a necessary element of the process. If not enough applications come in both options could be utilized. Start with the application process and then have the Board Chair appoint the remaining slots.

Once determined, the Screening Committee receives 60 minutes of training in a public session. Once the training is finished, the Committee will go into Executive Session to receive a list of candidates from OSBA. The Committee is then given a week to 10 days to go through the applications and select their personal top 10. It is important for the Screening Committee to help provide information in the process but they are not part of the decision. This falls to the Board.

**Candidate Selection:** The overall rankings from the Screening Committee are provided to the Board and they deliberate. In an executive session candidates are selected for an interview and the interview schedule is set. When the interviews occur (also in executive session) the Screening Committee can be part of the audience as spectators only. They can give quick feedback but at the end of the interviews, the Screening Committee is then excused and the Board deliberates, selecting the finalists. OSBA will contact all candidates successful and unsuccessful. OSBA obtains permission from the finalists for their names to go public. A press release is sent out by OSBA with a little information about the candidates.

CANDIDATE  
SELECTION

There is a two week timeline between when the finalists are selected by the Board to when a finalist forum is set up. During this time the Board conducts reference checks and can do site visits to the finalists home district/community. It was asked if the Board is able to do internet searches on candidates. According to Mr. Kelley, at this time it is not recommended, due to the potential for discrimination. He is currently working with his legal team at OSBA to develop guidelines for addressing this.

**Finalist Forum:** There are two parts to a finalist forum. 1) Community meet and greet and 2) a second interview.

FINALIST  
FORUM

The Board will set up an opportunity for the finalists to meet and greet the community. Basically, they bring staff and community in one area and every 30 minutes a new candidate comes in. The Board is present at this event.

Another option is to bring them in early in the day and then take the finalist around the community and give a tour of the District with a couple Board members. The candidate is then passed off to another couple of Board members who take them out to dinner and then take them to a Q&A with the community in the evening. After the day is over the Board members get together and compare notes of their interactions. This information drives the second interview and questions are developed. The second interview is after this activity and will likely be the next morning or next evening. The second interview is Board and District Secretary only. The Screening Committee does not sit in on this one.

Once the interviews are completed, the Board in executive session, deliberates and narrows their choice down to one person. Negotiations begin with a contract with the number one choice. At the next public meeting the contract is approved and the new Superintendent is announced.

**OSBA Commitment:** A question was asked – Can the Qs and Qs be developed without declaring a vacancy? According to Mr. Kelley, the OSBA contract can be started one year (develop the Qs and Qs) and finish it the next year. OSBA also has a two-year guarantee. If the person they bring us, and ultimately the Board hires, doesn't work out within 2 years, they will do another search for free.

OSBA  
COMMITMENT

**Recap:**

RECAP

- This is a 5-month process on average to do it right and get all the work done that needs to get done.
- Difficulties specifically to Vernonia: most of candidates in pool will likely not have Superintendent experience. Rural experience yes.
- There is an advantage to having a full time Superintendent. If the Board decides on a half time Superintendent, the individual will likely be a retired Administrator. Strongest chance to get the best possible candidate is to stay will full time Superintendent.
- Our facilities, huge plus.
- Academic Achievement, if that is the focus the Board wants, will be a plus – most Superintendents want to do this. It was noted that Student Achievement has been shown to be directly related to the relationship between Boards and the Superintendent.
- A challenge will be the rural location, Vernonia is not a suburb.

OSBA utilizes a direct approach to contact and recruit candidates. They can also access national databases. Out of state could be 20 – 30% of the candidate base. Most Districts when conducting a search have 3 main areas they desire:

1. Superintendent experience
2. In-State experience
3. Similar sized district experience

Once the candidate is hired, OSBA will provided 12 hours of Professional Development to assist the new person in the areas that they need. This is included in the fee the Board pays to OSBA to conduct the Superintendent Search. OSBA also offers a transition program including mentorship. The individual's first evaluation is developed with the Board, OSBA facilitates with the Board a priority of expectations and Superintendent priority of expectations, and communication protocols are established. The first 6 months on the job OSBA is coming in to support the Board and the new Superintendent.

Mr. Kelley handed out OSBA Brochures listing the costs for a Superintendent Search. A sample detailed proposal was also shared including the base price plus travel costs. Travel costs would not be extensive as it would likely only be mileage for the most part. The Board can conduct a self-directed search. OSBA, for a fee, gives the Board their playbook and offers phone support but there is no on-site support.

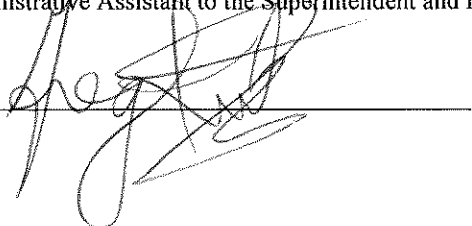
Mr. Kelley plugged the Scholarship Program within OSBA and the new Collaborative Governance model OSBA is supporting. This model defines the roles of the Superintendent and the Board but there is a meaningful role of the board in student achievement.

He also offered his cell number to the Board letting them know they can contact him if they have questions.

Workshop concluded at 11:41 a.m.

Submitted by Barb Carr,  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Directors

Chair



District Clerk

