



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORK SESSION MINUTES

1750 W. McKinney Butte- PO Box 2215 - Sisters, OR 97759 | ph: 541-549-2091 | sistersrecreation.com

**February 1, 2022- 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

**Call meeting to order** – Bob Keefer, president, called meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

Board members in attendance: Bob Keefer, board president, Heath Foott, board vice president, Peggy Tehan, board treasurer, Jeff Tryens, board secretary (via Zoom) Molly Baumann, board member (via Zoom).

Staff members in attendance: Jennifer Holland, executive director

Guests in attendance: Clark Brody, Mike Grey, Bruce Carpenter

### **Budget committee member interviews**

President Keefer introduced budget committee candidates Mike Grey and Bruce Carpenter. Grey and Carpenter were the only two applications received by the district for the two open budget committee member seats. President Keefer led the interview process and interviewees answered questions regarding their experience and vision of the district. After interviews were completed, applicants were excused. The board had no hesitation with either candidate and asked that the formal appointment of both Mike Grey and Bruce Carpenter be placed on the consent calendar at the next business meeting.

### **Strategic planning meeting follow-up**

Clark Brody attended the board meeting to facilitate a follow-up conversation on the strategic plan update which occurred at the January 11, 2022 work session. In the board packet, the board received draft minutes from the work session which included the board SWOT analysis and a list of what the board wanted the district to be known for in two years and five years. Mr. Brody asked the board if there were any comments or questions regarding items on the two-year and five-year list.

Secretary Tryens questioned whether the second item “District restructured or dissolved and reformed, with possible annexation of surround areas” and third item “A plan in place to restructure district and possible annex surround areas” on the five-year list could be restated in a way that either combined or removed one of them, as they seemed redundant.

This initiated a discussion regarding the difference between having a plan in place versus implementation of a plan to restructure and/or annex in new communities into the district. President Keefer stated that he would like to see a plan be developed after the renewal of the local option levy with implementation occurring in four to five years. Vice President Foott agreed with this statement. Secretary Tryens stated that implementation would be more than five years out due to the local option renewal not occurring till May 2023. President Keefer said that there is nothing preventing the district for putting a measure on the ballot prior to the completion of a five-year local option levy. Mr. Brody suggested that the statement “A plan in place to restructure district and possible annex surround areas” be moved to the two-year list. The board came to a consensus on the movement of item.

Member Baumann stated that the list was not reflecting her votes. Executive Director Holland stated that it was updated on the master sheets and that her votes will be reflected in the updated minutes.

Next steps involve working with staff and the community to determine priorities within the two- and five-year list and commonalities with the board priorities.

### Local Option Levy

Executive Director Holland and President Keefer discussed that matter of the local option levy renewal. The three items of discussion were the timing of the levy, if the board wanted to consider an increase, and what items the board needed to be able to make an informed decision.

Executive Director Holland presented historical data on Deschutes County election results to the board for the last five years, looking at similar measures and their outcomes for November and May elections. She then turned the discussion over to President Keefer to facilitate the conversation. President Keefer asked the board to first provide feedback on the timing of the levy and if the local option levy should be placed on the November 2022 or the May 2023 ballot. The board discussed the pros and cons of each. The pros of going in November are that there is larger voter turnout, the district has more time to plan and strategize if the renewal is unsuccessful, and it would get the district away from the school district local option levy that will be on the May 2023 ballot. The cons of going out in November is that with it being a gubernatorial election, which is projected to be contentious, it may attract voters who would not support tax levies. The pros of going in May is that there is more time to better position the district for a positive outcome, and the district passed the levy last time in a May election with good margins even with the school district levy being on the ballot. The cons of going out in May is the school district levy and if the levy fails, the district will have to wait until November 2023 to try again resulting in a year without local option levy tax dollars if renewal was successful in November 2023.

Ultimately the board saw pros and cons of both. As more data comes available by August 2022 with the outcomes for the C4C elementary school survey, the City's Parks Master Plan survey and the FY23 budget, the board will be better able to decide on a specific date.

President Keefer proceeded to the second question regarding a possible increase in the local option renewal amount. President Keefer stated that if there is a need for an increase, this will be informed by the data collected from the needs assessment and through the budgeting process. Vice President Foott stated that data was a must for them as board members to be able to defend an increase to the general public if that is ultimately what is decided. Secretary Tryens stated that he thought the focus groups had been very helpful in understanding what tax amount would be tolerated in the last election. He said he hopes the district would convene focus groups again especially considering the district is in a better financial position than before. Member Baumann said she doesn't think we should consider an increase of the levy considering that it barely passed last time. President Keefer stated that passing the levy by 6% would be considered a good win for most districts and that is it is worth the discussion of what it will cost the district to accomplish what the community wants. Secretary Tryens thought that the campaign from the last school district tax campaign which emphasized that the local option would not result in a tax increase resonated with a lot of people, lending some weight to sticking with existing levy amount.

The board then brainstormed what information they would need to help make the decision. Items are bulleted below:

- County projections on tax base for the five years;
- What is the current value? Is it assessed or real market value?;
- Understanding the impacts of inflation and new paid Oregon family medical leave law;
- How the current levy dollars are being spent especially regarding community demographics;
- Focus groups, that are a representative sample of the community, with same questions from previous needs assessment. Try to align with the City of Sisters community outreach process with the update of the parks master;
- Needs assessment to determine what people want and then the cost to provide this service;
- A decision from the school district regarding the future use of the Sisters Elementary School;



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- How can the district incorporate more capital projects in the renewal of the local option levy (i.e. pickleball courts, trail development, bike park paving, skate park improvements, etc.)?

President Keefer stated that Executive Director Holland needs to compile all the synthesize all the input provided and come back to the board with recommendations and/or further discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McNeale, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board of Directors on 03/22/22