



# West Ada

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

### **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**September 1, 2015**

Date, Place & Time	A special meeting of the Board of Trustees, West Ada School District, convened at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 1, 2015 at the District Service Center, 1303 E. Central Drive, Meridian, Idaho.
Trustees in Attendance	Chairman Tina Dean, Dr. Russ Joki, Dr. Julie Madsen, Carol Sayles, Mike Vuittonet (by phone at 7:38 p.m.)
Staff in Attendance	Dr. Linda Clark, Barbara Leeds, Alex Simpson, Trish Duncan, Joe Yochum, Cindy Sisson, Dr. Mandy White, Staci Low, Devan Delashmutt, Eric Exline, Jackie Thomason, Don Nesbitt, Ramona Lee
Guests	Elaine Eberharther-Maki, Will Krahn, Anne Little Roberts, Mary Ollie, Bob McCarvel, Clark Corbin, Sue Darden
<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tina Dean at 5:30 p.m.
<b>WORK SESSION</b>	<p>Elaine Eberharther-Maki provided training to the board on ethics and governance, sharing information and answering questions on the Idaho open meeting law, Idaho public records law, Idaho ethics in government and reviewing West Ada School District policies and select Idaho Statutes.</p> <p>The board recessed from work session at 7:24 p.m. and reconvened in regular session at 7:38 p.m.</p>
Amended Agenda Approved	Dr. Clark asked to amend the consent agenda to include Proposed Request #26: Structural Repairs at Meridian High School and a transportation report. Trustee Joki made a motion to include the request for structural repairs at Meridian High School and a transportation report as items #4 and #5 under Discussion/Action and to include an executive session under 74-206 (1) (b) to consider the evaluation, dismissal or discipline of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student; and 74-206 (1) (d) to consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in chapter 1, Title 74, Idaho Code. Trustee Sayles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
Consent Agenda Approved	<p>Trustee Joki moved, Trustee Madsen seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the consent agenda as amended.</p> <p>Requests for professional leave from Dani Davis, Jamie Dobson, Carla Karnes, Jason Leforgee, Cindy Sisson, Cyndi Spradley and Audra Thorpe for three days to attend the Teaching, Learning, and Coaching Conference in Denver, Colorado;</p> <p>Minutes of the July 28, 2015 regular board meeting;</p> <p>A job description for the School Nutrition Maintenance Tech;</p>

Proposal Request #26: Structural Repairs at Meridian High School.

## Discussion/Action

### Supplemental Levy Review

Mr. Simpson provided additional information on the 2014 supplemental levy that covered nine (9) school days at \$700,000 in costs per day; salaries and benefits for thirty-five (35) teachers and staff; replacement of the \$4.0M transfer from the school plant facility levy and replacement of funds from the Federal Jobs Bill at \$1.6M. He outlined the projected levy rate, which could change slightly with the receipt of final value rates from the counties. The bond amount has increased based on the election in March, and by law the district can levy from 12-21 months of payments. Estimates will keep the rate at \$3.99 on voter approved levies as promised to voters in the bond election.

Chairman Dean asked how many years the supplemental has been in place.

Mr. Simpson stated the first supplemental levy was run in 2005 for \$5M, it failed in 2011 and was rerun in 2012.

Chairman Dean stated the last supplemental was run to restore days and some lost teachers.

Dr. Clark added the first supplemental was run to hire thirty-five (35) teachers over the cap, to start the International Baccalaureate program at Renaissance High School and to open the first magnet programs. The supplemental that failed in 2011 was for \$18M and the amount was reduced in 2012 to \$14M.

Chairman Dean stated she did not want to lose the days and teachers covered under the current supplemental and wondered at what point the legislature says the patrons are fine to fund the districts.

Dr. Clark commented this is no longer a supplemental, it is a local operations levy paying for salaries, teachers and extra days. Adequate operational funding is the highest priority for administrators; however the legislature is focused on restoring funding to 2008 levels.

Chairman Dean stated the primary concern is how to communicate to legislators it is not okay to ask the local tax base to make up the difference.

Trustee Sayles asked if the district would lose thirty-five (35) teachers if the supplemental did not pass.

Dr. Clark replied it would also include classified staff and a reduction in calendar days.

Trustee Joki how many certified and classified staff would be affected.

Mr. Simpson replied 15-20 certified and the remainder were classified staff.

Chairman Dean asked for an explanation of the plant facility transfer.

Mr. Simpson explained the transfer was a one-time provision by the legislature to allow districts to ask their patrons to move money from the plant facility fund to general fund. The year this district went out to the patrons, they had

already cut \$18-20M and the transfer kept them from making deeper cuts to programs. Patrons approved moving \$4M to the General Fund for two years. When the two years ended, the district had no way to fund the \$4M other than to include it in a Supplemental Levy.

Trustee Joki echoed what others had said and continued that it was important to make clear to patrons we are doing this because of the failure of the legislature to meet its constitutional obligation to fund schools. It is unfortunate the amount of money this district has to ask patrons to fund. There is no indication when the legislature will increase funding to schools, could be eight months or longer. There is always a chance the appropriation will be increased. The message to our patrons needs to be that we have been put into this situation, the bulk of our funding goes to teachers and we need more, not less. Trustee Joki stated there were several dates they were given to make this decision, and asked if there were any additional meetings scheduled. Mr. Simpson replied there were none before the September 14<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Chairman Dean replied that one of the items they need to consider is special meeting Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup> to approve the amount of the emergency levy, and asked if there were other questions or comments.

Trustee Madsen commented on her belief that as policy makers and employees, they have a moral obligation to express outrage at the underfunding of public schools at the legislature. She has seen the district at the legislature for other reasons, but not to express the outrage of this district. By not putting teachers in the classrooms, they are not filling those moral obligations.

Chairman Dean explained the Day on the Hill event was a time for the district to express those concerns and that trustees could take personal opportunities to speak with legislators. If they vote to approve the resolution and the measure passes on Election Day, can the board choose to decrease or stop the levy in the second year?

Dr. Clark responded they have the option to drop the second year of the levy. Dr. Clark asked permission to respond to Trustee Madsen's comment. This district is on record at the legislature testifying on school funding, writing white papers and will continue to be very verbal on all of the ways we are underfunded. Mr. Simpson is working on a committee to look at funding by enrollment, not attendance and she welcomes the board participation. Beyond the Day on the Hill, they talk with legislators at special events throughout the community.

Trustee Joki stated he knew Alex was on the committee and he commented that enrollment is not the answer, the answer is tax dollars, and the legislature has to increase taxes to fund education. There are no magic formula shifts, going from ADA to enrollment will not fund the issue. Trustee Joki asked Mr. Exline if this information was something parents have received.

Mr. Exline replied that he could send out information using Blackboard Connect.

Trustee Joki replied that would be a good tool and asked if the board would consider delaying a vote until September 4<sup>th</sup>. The parents could be alerted regarding the topic and asked to attend the meeting to voice their support for the levy and the school district. Trustee Joki made a motion to move the decision on the supplemental levy to the September 4, 2015 special meeting with an understanding that Eric Exline will send out a burst to parents regarding the significance of the event and asking for their support. The motion was seconded by Trustee Sayles.

Trustee Vuittonet asked if that date will meet the deadlines if the decision was postponed.

Dr. Clark replied they could meet the deadlines on both the emergency and supplemental levy if the meeting was scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup>. However, if the intent is to get patrons to attend, the meeting would need to be scheduled in the afternoon so it would not conflict with the BSU game and high school sports scheduled for that evening.

Trustee Joki added the burst needs to let parents know the importance of the levy and that their voices need to be heard.

Mr. Exline explained that he could build a message into the link which would send a survey out to parents asking for their feedback on the levy; and they could use the Let's Talk feature on the web site as well.

Chairman Dean called for a vote on the motion to move the decision on the supplemental levy to the September 4, 2015 special meeting with an understanding that Eric Exline will send out a burst to parents regarding the significance of the event and asking for their support. The motion passed unanimously.

#### FTE From Growth Allocations

Ms. Leeds reviewed graphs representing the gains made over time in lowering class sizes, especially at the elementary level. Class sizes have evened out with the addition of more teachers, but she and principals continue to work through capacity problems. Schools need the extra help, but classroom space is not available. High schools and special education classrooms are showing the greatest need. Some high school classes are 35-40 students but the complexity of the schedule makes it difficult to fix. Alta Graham has been providing much needed assistance with this issue.

Chairman Dean asked if the special education allotment from the state was the same.

Ms. Leeds replied that Ms. Lee, the special education director could probably explain, but the district would have to find folks and do alternative authorization routes. Currently they are looking for math and science applicants as well as specialty areas in middle and high school.

Chairman Dean asked if there was an issue with space at the middle and high schools.

Ms. Leeds responded they can have teachers rove with a cart. It is not ideal and they try not to do that, but that is why rooms are not an issue at the secondary level.

Dr. Clark stated they had made accommodations for space; they knew Eagle Hills was going to be crowded, so they moved the GT program to Seven Oaks. Can the district afford to continue modified schools when there is a need for space? Some portable buildings have been placed, but adding more when a new building will open shortly might not be a good idea. Ms. Leeds has held back some FTE to address some of the issues at the beginning of school, now the emergency levy will give them the ability to additional growth areas. During the downturn, the trustees increased the maximum class size by two, when classes reach that maximum they are assigned one hour of an overcrowded classroom assistant. The overcrowded classroom assistants used to be required by the state, but they took away the maximum class size numbers. The district had to pick up the costs.

Chairman Dean asked if the combo classes in elementary are counted in to the totals.

Ms. Leeds replied they try and keep combo classes small, they could develop a combo class at Eagle Hills to help with overcrowding, but there is no room to put it in. Other buildings in the district are running the combo classrooms. Another strategy they have implemented is to put a .5 FTE teacher in a classroom for intervention. This has been done at Joplin, Siena and Eagle Hills and gives the administration another option.

Chairman Dean noted there wasn't any elementary class over on the graphs.

Ms. Leeds stated there were six classrooms at Eagle Hills, Hunter and Siena with overcrowded assistants, but it is always better to have a certified teacher in the classroom.

Dr. Clark stated the number of assistants will increase throughout the year.

Chairman Dean asked if there were any class size limits at the middle and high schools.

Ms. Leeds replied they look at the high school schedules, but it is an impossibility not to have lower numbers in the specialty classes. High schools are good at combining small classes in languages to use the FTE more efficiently. They are asked not to run classes under 25 students.

Chairman Dean asked if the only remedy is to get additional FTE.

Ms. Leeds replied that was only true at the elementary level.

Trustee Joki stated that as he hears the discussion, he is uncertain where the priority is, subject or grade level. He thinks the board needs work sessions to establish where the most pressing needs are. Even without having extra classroom space, they can provide relief such as teaming or moving from room to room. He hoped Ms. Leeds realized the importance of working with the principals, this is not a top down decision and they need to engage with her

and Ms. Graham on these decisions. Trustee Joki made a motion the board be supportive of adding as many additional teachers as possible with the emergency levy and from savings in the district budget. He understands this is not limited to the classroom teacher, but for GT, special education, etc. They need to utilize the growth FTE at the maximum level possible.

Dr. Clark pointed out that the Emergency Levy is one-time money and asked if the board wants to spend these funds on continuing costs.

Trustee Joki replied there will be a way to sustain some of this. They need to look at a pressing need and deal with it right now, he doesn't want teachers to think we are holding back. The teachers know this is a combination of one-time and state appropriation funds.

Chairman Dean asked if the motion could be amended to direct the district to use all monies, or should they hold for an explanation of the emergency levy?

Trustee Joki withdrew the motion until the report on the emergency levy was complete.

Ms. Leeds explained that she is in communication with the principals all of the time on pressing needs. They work together on decisions because the principals know their schools, classroom and teachers. At the high school they do look at sharing staff between schools and she plans travel and prep times with elementary principals.

#### Emergency Levy

Mr. Simpson explained the district would be collecting attendance from the first day of school Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Schools are asked to do a head count of students during second period each day during this time frame. Mr. Simpson's department will scrub the data, looking for anomalies, and will figure the average daily attendance to enter into the calculation worksheet. Currently the enrollment stands at 36,257, but it is anticipated the number will go down as they calculate the numbers into the formula.

Chairman Dean asked how the virtual school house numbers are counted.

Mr. Simpson replied they are counted when they log into the system.

Dr. Clark explained that parameters were established to expect 200-250 additional homeschoolers in the Virtual School House and these enrollments were closely monitored so they would not lose funding.

Mr. Simpson reviewed the computation of emergency school levy form with trustees and pointed out the language that goes into the newspaper for notice requirements.

Chairman Dean asked what the money from the emergency levy has been used for historically.

Dr. Clark explained there are two periods of history, one during the downturn and one before. During the downturn the emergency levy was treated as a revenue item, was put in the budget and was spent as part of that budget. The board made a commitment to try and back away from budgeting the

emergency levy, so this fiscal year, only half of the projected amount was budgeted. Prior to the downturn, the money was used to meet one time needs. The district used to balance the budget by taking funds out of the General Fund for textbooks while waiting for the emergency levy, and then would order the books from the levy funds. The district is reluctant to use these dollars for staff, there is only funding for one year. During the downturn the district had to use the levy as part of the budget. The rating agencies do not like district's budgeting one time money, and they were pleased we are working to change that pattern.

Chairman Dean asked how it would be handled if the emergency levy is used for certificated personnel.

Dr. Clark responded that any certificated staff at this time would receive a one year contract with no obligation to continue. If a certificated employee is hired prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>, they are on track for continued employment.

Chairman Dean stated it was just the calendar, there was no other way.

Ms. Leeds responded that while we are under no contractual obligation, they would have given staffing to buildings. The number of students in those classrooms would not change and the district would not have the dollars to keep the employee.

Chairman Dean clarified that if they funded ten teachers with the levy, the district could not fund next year unless they found money either in the general fund or through legislative increases.

Dr. Clark confirmed that if they hired ten teachers and want to keep them, those dollars would come off of the top of the growth FTE next fiscal year. The district would have already used that money if the projected growth came through. There is nothing to prohibit, we just need to go in with our eyes open. This is a significant amount of levy and the classrooms are the number one need. The board will need to decide what they are comfortable with.

Trustee Vuittonet commented this has been a dilemma for school districts including us. In some respects, it is like living on credit, you don't know what you will have next year. Our district has been fortunate because we keep on growing, the board needs to be careful and not overcommit.

Mr. Simpson responded that as a finance director, he would caution them not to use one time money, especially when the district is trying to wean themselves off the emergency levy. They did that with the fund balance and the district is still trying to get out of that hole. It is an ongoing cost. The fund balance is budgeted every year and we save all year to help that out. He is not saying they couldn't hire teachers, just hire them out of the general fund. He agreed with Trustee Vuittonet, using one time money can get you in a hole and they are still trying to get out of the hole from six or seven years ago.

Trustee Sayles stated the greatest need is in the classroom and it matters to a child. It matters to the teacher who is trying to facilitate when they have fifteen or sixteen personalities to think about. They need to put teachers in the

classroom so children have an adequate education. She supports putting teachers in the classroom.

Trustee Madsen asked to go back to the supplemental levy for just a moment. These two things should be presented together. Philosophically, there will be taxpayer resentment with the district if we slide the emergency levy in. We have to find funding somewhere and this seems less than transparent. How is what the board does going to translate to teachers in the classroom? What is the breakdown for the next two years if the supplemental passes?

Mr. Simpson explained that if the supplemental levy is approved, it would continue to cover the cost of nine days of school and thirty-five teachers and classified staff. The plant facility transfer covered \$4M they did not have to cut from the budget. These two levies are different items and when he shows the total levy amount for the county, the amounts are added together. The board will need to take action on both levies.

Dr. Clark stated that Mr. Simpson had made a good point as the administration is proposing they continue with the same items. Currently almost 90% of the General Fund budget is in personnel costs and 10% is operational. This is ongoing operational money we are not receiving from the state.

Mr. Simpson clarified that in our budget 86% is salary and benefits; the transportation contract is 5% and the rest is purchased service and supplies, utilities, contracts and discretionary funds. With \$7M in discretionary funds, that leaves 3.6% of the budget they have discretion over.

Chairman Dean asked if the emergency levy is one year and the supplemental levy is for two years.

Dr. Clark answered that trustees can choose to do one or two years on the supplemental, they don't have to levy the second year.

Chairman Dean asked if we are under the maximum levy amount on both.

Dr. Clark answered we are only at the maximum on the emergency levy. We are holding the tax levy rate at 3.99 to keep the levy the same, as promised to voters during the bond.

Chairman Dean asked if they could include the emergency levy money in the supplemental levy.

Dr. Clark responded that would push the tax rate above 3.99. The emergency levy was put in place to get emergency money from year to year.

Chairman Dean asked if this was like an impact fee on the back end.

Dr. Clark answered that an impact fee is on new construction, this would affect everyone.

Chairman Dean asked if they added the \$3.2M to the supplemental, would they stay under 3.99.

Mr. Simpson answered they could make the 3.99 with an adjustment to the plant facility levy amount.

Chairman Dean wondered about Trustee Madsen's point that voters don't understand the different buckets of money. It can be disheartening.

Dr. Clark stated the district would not be keeping its promise to the taxpayers. They could pay less months on the bond and reduce the amount of the plant.

Chairman Dean stated she wants to make it easier to understand.

Mr. Simpson asked trustees to think about the last time the district went down this road. The supplemental was for \$18.5M and it got voted down pretty hard. The \$14M with \$4M to cover the plant funds was easier to explain.

Trustee Vuittonet asked if Chairman Dean was asking to increase the supplemental and not take the emergency levy dollars.

Chairman Dean answered that was what she was asking about. Trustee Vuittonet asked Mr. Simpson if the emergency levy is automatic and for expenses from new students.

Mr. Simpson replied in the affirmative.

Trustee Vuittonet recognizes the district has grown and we have more costs. The emergency levy is hard to explain but is a mechanism that has been helpful. The commitment to keep the levy rate has been strong and he hoped the board will keep it at the same rate. These are benefits because of growth and they can express, that by not raising the tax rate, the district has remained consistent.

Trustee Madsen shared a couple of thoughts. One is that she disagrees with Trustee Vuittonet. If this is a mechanism from the state, they are allowing us a way to get more money without having to get funds from them, and it is a shell game. Patrons don't understand the when and why and it seems like we are crooked. Most people are pro-education but people become disheartened. We can't leave the emergency levy on the table. It is easy money. We need to recognize it is not good business practice, we need to offer taxpayers more than business as usual. She needs to see something before Friday to put X number of teachers into the classroom or we are going to look at expenses and pull that money out. To simply have this reflective levy on top of a planned emergency is insincere and she challenged the board to do better.

Chairman Dean asked what the specific plans for the emergency levy were.

Dr. Clark responded the money was not budgeted this year. Half of last year's emergency levy is in the budget. The administration will wait for the board to decide and then will bring a list of needs. They do not spend the money before they have approval. There is no professional development in the general budget, only from the state PD money. They haven't had a book adoption in a dozen years and curriculum content is woefully out of date. There is an \$11M difference between what the district receives from the state and how much we pay out in teacher salaries. The large discrepancy also exists in classified

salaries and administrative costs are close or under. They will be able to reduce the differential over the next five years with the career ladder, but until the state deals with the top of the salary schedule, we won't get out of the entire \$11M hole.

Chairman Dean asked for action or a motion for the supplemental or emergency levy. As there were none, they will set a special board meeting.

Chairman Dean asked for trustee availability on September 4<sup>th</sup> and because the public would be invited to discuss the levies, the meeting would need to be in the afternoon.

Trustees discussed availability on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and Trustee Vuittonet made a motion to change the special meeting date from September 4<sup>th</sup> to September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m., the motion was seconded by Trustee Madsen and the vote was unanimous to approve.

Meridian High School  
Change Oder Approved

Mr. Yochum explained that structural issues had become evident during site demolition. Although this is not part of the remodel, the repair work is critical to restore structural integrity to the stem walls supporting the existing masonry walls.

Trustee Joki noted that since this is presented on short notice and knowing the condition of that school, he would vote for the approval of the change order.

Chairman Dean thanked Trustee Joki for the motion, but she intended to hear the report from the project manager.

Trustee Joki called for a point of order.

Trustee Sayles seconded the motion.

No report was given by the construction manager.

Chairman Dean called for the vote. Trustee Joki voted yes, Trustee Sayles voted yes, Trustee Vuittonet voted yes, Trustee Madsen voted no and Chairman Dean voted no.

Transportation Update

Dr. Clark updated trustees on the transportation issues. Keith Englebret from Cascade Transportation is currently onsite and will be meeting with Dr. Clark and other staff members on Thursday regarding the situation. She has also spoken with counsel and will have the report regarding violations of their contract. An update will be added to the September 3<sup>rd</sup> special meeting.

Trustee Sayles inquired if the situation has improved.

Dr. Clark stated that four of our classified staff has been tasked with returning phone calls for Cascade. Ms. Carson has been spending her days at their location and Mr. Simpson was there to make sure the reimbursement forms are correct before they are sent to the state. Information regarding special education routes will be part of the update on Thursday.

Trustee Vuittonet asked how much time our staff had put in and if they would be willing to reimburse the district for those costs.

Dr. Clark replied they would calculate the costs and give that cost to Cascade for reimbursement.

Trustee Madsen asked to have a transportation update as part of the meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Trustee Sayles made a motion to go into executive session under Idaho Code 74-206 (1) (b) to consider the evaluation, dismissal or discipline of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student; and 74-206 (1) (d) to consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code. Trustee Madsen seconded the motion and the board was polled.

Trustee Sayles voted yes, Trustee Joki voted yes, Trustee Madsen voted yes and Chairman Dean voted yes.

Trustee Vuittonet asked if the clerk and superintendent would be included in the meeting.

Trustee Joki stated he would ask for the clerk and superintendent to be available along with some other employees.

Trustee Vuittonet stated that he didn't know the difference between being in the room and being available. Will the clerk be available to take the notes?

Trustee Joki replied that he could not answer that question.

Chairman Dean stated she could only reply to what had been stated.

Trustee Joki asked for the clerk and superintendent to be available, which is as far as he can take it without being in executive session.

Trustee Vuittonet stated that fundamentally, he has to take issue with this. He doesn't know if there are things the superintendent and clerk can't hear, he is concerned because he has no idea what they are going in to executive session for.

Chairman Dean stated she did not know the reason either, they need to discuss when they go into executive session and see what information will be shared.

Trustee Vuittonet thanked Chairman Dean.

Trustee Vuittonet voted not to go into executive session if the clerk and superintendent are excused.

Chairman Dean replied that once there is a quorum, they are in executive session that does not preclude him from being included. His vote was noted.

The board moved into executive session at 9:18 p.m.

Executive Session:

In attendance: Chairman Tina Dean, Trustee Russell Joki, Trustee Julie Madsen, Trustee Carol Sayles, Trustee Mike Vuittonet (by phone), Dr. Linda Clark, Trish Duncan

Trustees reviewed personnel issues regarding an employee and discussed records that are exempt from disclosure.

Dr. Clark was excused at 9:35 p.m.

The board recessed from executive session at 10:17 p.m. and reconvened in regular session.

Trustee Madsen made a motion to direct Eric Exline and Devan DeLashmutt to secure all server information. The motion was seconded by Trustee Joki and the passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Joki moved, Trustee Sayles seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

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Chairman

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Clerk