

School Board Minutes

Banks School District 13

November 23, 2009

Minutes are official after Board approval

5:30 Board Work Session – District Conference Room

Agenda

Board Members Present:

Will Moore, Chair
Kathy Edison
Richard Bowden
Norie Dimeo-Ediger
Laurie Schlegel

Others Present:

Schann Nelson, Independent
Jeanne Magmer, C&M Consulting
Larry Harvey, Pac-West
Rick Rainone – Cornerstone Consulting

Administrators Present

Jim Foster, Superintendent
Simon Levear Business Manager

Communications Consultant Presentations

C&M Communications

Mr. Moore said the intent of this meeting is to narrow the decision on a communications consultant and potential campaign managers for a prospective bond measure. Mr. Levear contacted Jeanne Magmer, Mr. Moore said he and Simon Levear contacted a few others based on information from Liz Kaufman. Mr. Moore stated that Jeanne Magmer said she was interested in both the communications piece and the campaign piece. Mr. Moore said the PAC would hire the campaign person. The other company, Pac West Communications is also present for the work session. Mr. Moore said that he wanted two companies to interview. Mr. Levear said that Mr. Harvey from Pac West came out on Friday and spent two hours in the district, talking to people in the junior high and high school. Mr. Moore said he asked Rick Rainone to also stop by tonight. He said the Facility Committee had asked the board to retain Rick Rainone as consultant on the proposed bond. He said Mr. Rainone played a huge role in the last bond measure.

Mr. Moore said he asked the two communications consultants presenting tonight if first, were they interested in performing the role of communication consultant for the prospective bond. He said the position is paid for by the district, and in the past has involved evaluating the survey before it goes to the field, interpreting the survey after the results are back, identifying the strategy and message that represents the bond effectively including the crafting of the bond title. He said the second question was whether or not they would be interesting in becoming involved in the campaign, and working with the PAC. Mr. Moore stated that Jeanne said she would like to be involved in both. Jeanne Magmer gave the board a timeline for possible bond levy in May 2009. She said the stimulus money available might give more opportunity for a successful bond levy. She said when the district goes out again, someone has to work on the district side so that the survey put in the field asks the questions the district needs the answers to in order to make the best decisions; then takes the survey and does an in-depth analysis of the results, and to make sure the public document is translated into something the PAC can use as a game plan to be successful. She said the survey piece is critical, and will give the best data to make the decision. She said once the information is in place the district doesn't have the resources to make sure on the information side, to make sure the messages get out in the sequence, that the right district information is going to the right people at the right time. She said the district needs a general information piece of what will be done and why. She said that has to be done before the PAC starts phoning. She said the time planning is vital. She said the PAC has to take the game plan and make their commitment to it. Jeanne said that C&M packages the message out in the right sequence to the right people at the right time. Jeanne Magmer said it was very important to have all players involved in the process. She said the survey will guide the game plan, and if C&M became the campaign consultant, there would be a separate contract with the PAC. Jeanne discussed the timeline and activities for a May campaign. She said with the federal stimulus, it makes for a very attractive package. Laurie Schlegel asked if there is a benefit of going out in May versus November. Jeanne said it is best to wait for the survey results. Mr. Moore said that neither the fire dept nor the city is going out in either election. Ms. Magmer said the federal benefit package eligibility might affect May versus November 2010. Mr. Levear said both times would be fine for participation in the program. Jeanne Magmer said that it will be important to test and see where the community stands, and the district has the support and energy for May versus November. She said the survey would be the best source of information on this issue. She said Moore Information would be helpful in the analysis of the survey results. Ms. Magmer said it would be important to test different components in the survey to see where the community stands. The board will make the final decision on what will and will not be included in the bond election. She said that Rick Rainone is very good, and he would make sure the district did not miss any key components. Mr. Bowden asked if the district had the ability to get the pertinent information out to the voters by May, is the district better off with a shorter timeframe than going all the way to November? Jeanne

Magmer said that the district might lose the momentum over summer. She said that she didn't know what the district had done since the last bond, or where the energy level is. Mr. Moore asked who would be included on the district team to work with the consultant. Ms. Magmer said that the Superintendent is the lead, with the business manager, a representative from the architectural firm, and a board member or chair on the district team. She said the board gets the survey and analysis reports. She said the PAC, although independent of the district, there needs to be some contact with the district, such as a board member serving on the PAC. She said she provides an administrator handbook, which includes all the information that needs to be sent out, when it needs to be sent out, a checklist and a list of procedures for the administrators. Mr. Bowden said that to be able to control the information, does C&M time the release of the information so it comes when they want it released, or do they develop ahead of time a timeline. She said if a survey is done, the district is on the survey company's timeline. Ms. Magmer said a formal report would be given to the board on the information compiled. Mr. Bowden asked about information given to the community. She said a mailer would be prepared to let the community know the facts of the proposed election. She said there would be a fact sheet for the community to be shared at meetings, on the websites, in the building newsletters. Ms. Magmer said that she would like a more expanded contract with the district for this election to allow for more involvement in the election. Mr. Moore asked if the facilities planning committee has time to review the proposed project before the end of January. Pete Edison said it may be possible, and the FPC tentatively is scheduled to meet Dec. 2. Jeanne Magmer said that the district would be pushing if the required information is not ready until January 31 – the November timeline would be more feasible. Mr. Edison said that in his opinion a November ballot makes more sense. Ms. Magmer said vendors, OEA, local business, staff and individuals may contribute to the PAC. She said there might be potential to have donations from Intel if we have parents that are Intel managers. She said someone who has an in, and knows who to call, will have to make the contact. She said Rick Rainone's company has made contributions to campaigns. Mr. Bowden asked about the \$\$ needed for the election. Ms. Magmer said the money needed would be \$3/voter for 1000 voters, up to \$5/voter if there will be substantial mailings. She said this would cover the out of pocket expenses. She said the more money raised, the easier it is to accomplish the tasks. Mr. Moore asked how much the PAC could expect to pay a consultant for an active role in a campaign? Ms. Magmer said C&M charges \$125/hr; the cost will be at about the \$2500 level, with 40 to 60 hours of time spent. She said if the decision of the board were to go out for the November election, C&M would revise the timeline, with the survey most likely happening after Spring break. Ms. Magmer said the district couldn't go out for a survey until it decides what it wants to present to the voters as components of the bond package.

Pac-West

Larry Harvey said that PacWest Communications has 24 employees in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Alaska, California and Washington DC. He gave the board a handout giving information on the company, and gave the board a brief history. He said it is based in Wilsonville. He said he came Friday and spent some time in the schools. He said the legislative will have a supplemental session in February after the election, and discussion of the bond measure after the session may not be the best time. He said that he didn't think there would be time to do everything necessary by May, and that November 2010 would be the best time from a timing standpoint. He said between now and September 2010 data collection research should be done. He said that for a November 2010 election, the survey should be done September 2010 right after Labor Day, polling to see what issue moves what demographics. He said it would be important to find champions in the 60+ age groups. He said the voters in the undecided group needs to come over to the yes votes. He said the immediate concentration needs to be narrowing down the area of research. He said the secondary poll would look at how many new voters have moved into the district, and what is their profile. He said the district needs to look at the services the respondents are in favor of. He said where the newer voters might have a different perception than someone that grew up in Banks. He said polling would help the district determine how to move forward. He said this region in Oregon is projected to double in population in the future, and there is an interest in smaller towns. He gave the board reports on bonding opportunities. He said that fund raising is always a challenge, can be difficult, but there are many ways to raise money. Mr. Foster asked how much money it will take for the bond election. Mr. Harvey said the initial amount is \$10,000. He said a level of familiarity needs to be developed, and we have to remind the yes voters to get out and vote. In the presidential election Banks had 3200 voters vote, and there are 3500 voters in the district. Mr. Foster asked when the survey should go out. Mr. Harvey said the survey should be done right after Labor Day. Mr. Foster said a lot of energy will be put in before the survey – Mr. Harvey said there are ways to get information to the community prior to the survey – and the district needs to develop a method and way that the needs and the role the schools play in the community becomes a household term. He said the district needs to work with the teachers to have specific issues they may raise for the next bond measure. Common dialogue at school and in the community needs to be ongoing. Board members will draw questions out of community members. Open house at the end of the school year might be considered where community members could come and quiz the school board. He said the district needs to get into the community core set values to be able to communicate and get the message delivered to them. He said basic information about the needs won't

change, but to create the message that relates to the individual is what is needed. Mr. Foster asked about the purpose of the survey. Mr. Harvey said the most common purpose is to see the primary question answered. Mr. Foster asked what percentage is needed to go forward. Mr. Harvey said part of that is dependent upon undecided. He said he hoped there wouldn't be less than 40% yes votes. He said the high turnout last time was the presidential election. He said it is important for consistency all the way through the bond election process. Mr. Moore asked if there was an outline of tasks for communications and related expenses for these tasks. Mr. Harvey said he did not have one at this time. He said the development of the ballot title, the explanatory statement, and the informational piece would cost approximately \$3000. He said it is important to have the ballot title in the collateral campaign materials – he said this is part of the education process. Mrs. Dimeo-Ediger asked what the strategy is to wait to take the survey until September. Mr. Harvey said the reasoning is that people's attitude change over time by outside influences that the district has no control over, such as in November the property tax statements come out, but the needs of the district haven't changed. Mr. Bowden said that, his understanding is, the survey is not used to adjust the bond. Mr. Harvey said that is correct, the survey allows for adjustment on how the message is delivered. Mr. Harvey said that the interest free loan for 15 years is a great selling tool.

Cornerstone Management Group

Mr. Moore said that Mr. Rick Rainone was involved in the last bond election. Rick Rainone said that Cornerstone has worked with school districts to deliver their bonds. Hillsboro School District, Scappoose School District, North Clackamas School District and Salem Kaiser School District in their recent bonding processes. Mr. Rainone said he has 10 employees, and that his company does not get paid until after the bond passes. He said the company manages the costs to make sure what the district spends its money on is the right price; the cost strategy, scheduling so the projects are delivered when they say they will be delivered, which includes the bid process, the city permits, the quality of the building, and they manage relationships required to do a school bond, such as the relationships with design firms, construction firms, and the city. He said his company offers their services to build the project schedule, helps prepare the project budget, and so it matches up to reports required by the state. He said the campaign consultant will help develop the campaign strategies, and Cornerstone will support them by helping to define what is included in the bond. He said Cornerstone would help deliver the bond. As the district builds the bond campaign, someone has to help develop the budget. He said this was vital because this will help with not promising more than the budget can deliver if, for example, inflation is not dealt with. He said this takes away the credibility. He said the interest-free bond now is an incredible deal. He said the budget has to line up with the scope of the work. Mr. Rainone said the prices for 2009 are incredible, and 15% more hard assets can be purchased right now. He said he thinks 2010 will be similar. Mr. Levear said the interest-free element has led the discussion.

Mr. Moore asked about the expense. Mr. Rainone said the work done previous to the bond, he doesn't charge much, and did not charge the district last time. He said there needs to be some agreement that allows them to work together, but there won't be much charge for the pre-bond work. He said the company makes their money post-bond. He said the campaign consultant would develop the bond strategy. Mr. Moore said he would like an agreement for the pre-bond phase. Mr. Rainone said there could be no connection to the post-bond phase at this time. Mr. Moore said the district did look at the post bond program at that time, and he would like an outline of what the company offers. Mr. Rainone said he would work on an agreement pre-bond, and an outline of what can be available post-bond. Mr. Rainone said if the bond passes, the district has to go thru the process of an RFP according to the state statutes. He said he would send a pre-bond proposal to Simon. Laurie Schlegel asked if he had a recommendation for a communications consultant. Mr. Rainone said he did not know Pac West, but he knew Jeanne Magmer, and said she had a long track record in school bonds. Mr. Rainone said that the bond needs to include what is needed, and make sure the budget can deliver what is needed. Mr. Rainone said he thinks the district can get to a budget of what is needed in 30 to 60 days. He said prices have not gone up since the last bond election. Mr. Rainone said there is a lot of work that has to be done before the polling is done. Mr. Rainone said May balloting does not have tax statements coming out the same week. He said that May would be really pressing the district, and there is a lot of work to be done prior. He said he thought there would be a better chance of passing after the pieces are well defined, and the work is done. He said he would send Simon a proposal for pre-bond work. Mr. Rainone said it would be a good idea to contact Scappoose and ask them for information on how they passed their bond.

Facilities Planning Committee

Pete Edison, Chairman of the Facilities Planning Committee, said that Mr. Rainone was invaluable in the last bond election, and his expertise was evident. Laurie Schlegel said that she felt the campaign fell apart last time because the ideas were not clear and things changed. Mr. Moore said during the last bond election time was an issue. Mr. Edison said that the first order of business was the list of questions from DLR. He said there are seven members. Richard Bowden is the new board member, and he said he would like to add the

student body president, a representative from the high school. He would also like the principals involved, and anyone who could help make the decisions needed. He said the district needs a solid plan, the message needs to get to the voters of what they will get for \$25.5 million, and a detailed site plan, that has classroom layout. He said that DLR could produce this plan. Mr. Foster said that Mr. Rainone could sit in on these facility meetings also. Laurie Schlegel said that this would help take care of the rumors. Kathy Edison said to inform the voters what the plan is helps with the survey process. Mr. Moore said he felt the board decides what the district can pay for versus what the district needs, which he said is what the facilities planning committee works on. He said the board can change the needs list, but he said he felt their job is to bring forth what the students need. The board discussed the \$1.99 additional tax and Mr. Moore said the people promoting the bond did not present the information correctly to the voters, stating the bond cost \$1.99, which was incorrect. Mrs. Edison said there were problems with backup on the cost. Mr. Moore said the information is what the communications consultant will help the district present. Laurie Schlegel said that people would still remember the information given out last time. Mr. Edison said the traffic piece at the elementary would be included in the entire traffic plan. Mr. Moore said a step in the FPC process is to have community stakeholders involved. Mrs. Edison said in Hermiston there was a separate blue-ribbon group of community movers and shakers that reviewed the FPC work and the dollar amount, and they came up with the same recommendation. She said these are the people that would write the letters to the editor in favor of the bond. Laurie Schlegel said she went to a Beaverton School District focus group. She said they were asked what they wanted in their school, they gave their ideas, and bought into it. Laurie Schlegel suggested a high school classified person should be included on the FPC. Mr. Foster said that Debbie Mott is the president of classified and would be good on the committee. Mr. Edison said he heard the presentations on the architects, and that he was still positive about DLR and they were clearly the winner in the RFP. He said there is also the time element. Mr. Foster asked if the FPC would like DLR to attend the meeting 12/2. Mr. Edison said he would let them know. Board consensus was for the FPC to move forward with the site plan. Mr. Moore asked if the board wanted to hear more from other communication consultants. Norie Dimeo-Ediger asked whom Vernonia used as a communications consultant in the last bond election. Mr. Levear said he would find out and let the board know. Board consensus was to hire C&M Communications pending research. Mrs. Edison said that Jeanne Magmer had a great deal of school bond experience. Pete Edison said that Jeanne did work last year free gratis. Mrs. Edison said that C&M Communications did some work free gratis last time. Mrs. Edison said she didn't think Jeanne Magmer was asked to help much last time. Mrs. Edison said that in September parents aren't in to school yet; April would be a better time for a survey. Mr. Bowden asked if May was out for the election. Mr. Moore said the board had not made that decision yet. Mr. Rainone said with the timeline, May would be difficult. Mrs. Edison said that Jeanne Magmer expressed the same thought. Mr. Bowden said that he felt November would be a better time to go for the election. The board discussed the pros and cons of May versus November election. Board consensus was to consider a November election. Mr. Edison said he felt May was not realistic. Mrs. Edison said it was important to do it right; but the survey will be the ultimate decision of whether the board goes out for an election or not. Mr. Bowden said that it would be helpful to know in April. The board discussed being ready in August, and let the public know about the bond and get all the facts out. The board discussed whether or not going out for the \$25.5 million bond again. The board discussed the possibility of going out for more than a \$1.99/\$1,000 bond, and the no interest loan aspect. The board discussed the hiring of the communications consultant. The board consensus was to find out whom did the campaign for Vernonia, talk to the PAC for Scappoose and Vernonia, and make a decision in the December board meeting. For the pre-bond consultant, board consensus was to wait for his proposal, and make the decision at the next board meeting. Mr. Edison said he recommended Mr. Rainone for the pre-bond consultant. Simon said he would forward the proposal email from Rick Rainone to the board. He said that he believes the hiring can be done without additional bids under the professional services exemption.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.