

# OFFICIAL



## CROOK COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES MAY 7, 2020 - 1:30 PM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via Zoom): Scott Cooper, Patti Norris, Doug Smith, Gwen Carr

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (by phone connection): Walt Wagner

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT (In conference room): Sara Johnson, Anna Logan, Stacy Smith, Joel Hoff, Sean Corrigan, Jason Carr, Mona Boyd

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT (via Zoom): Jake Huffman, Michelle Jonas, Jim Bates, Michelle Zistel, Marques Hase, Adam Stefanek, Kurt Sloper, Pete Goodrich, Michelle Williams, Michael Allen

### 1.0 CALL TO ORDER

- 1.1 Flag Salute
- 1.2 Roll Call to Establish a Quorum
- 1.3 Recognition of Visitors

Board Chair Scott Cooper called the meeting to order, recited the Flag Salute, determined a quorum (by Zoom) and recognized visitors who had joined by Zoom.

Doug Smith moved and Patti Norris seconded the Board approve the agenda as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor 5-0 as follows: Scott Cooper, Patti Norris, Doug Smith, Gwen Carr, and Walt Wagner.

### 2.0 RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC IMPACT

Superintendent Johnson stated that we need to determine how best to serve the district while in the midst of COVID-19. She shared a document with the Board from WORKSHARE OREGON with the following information:

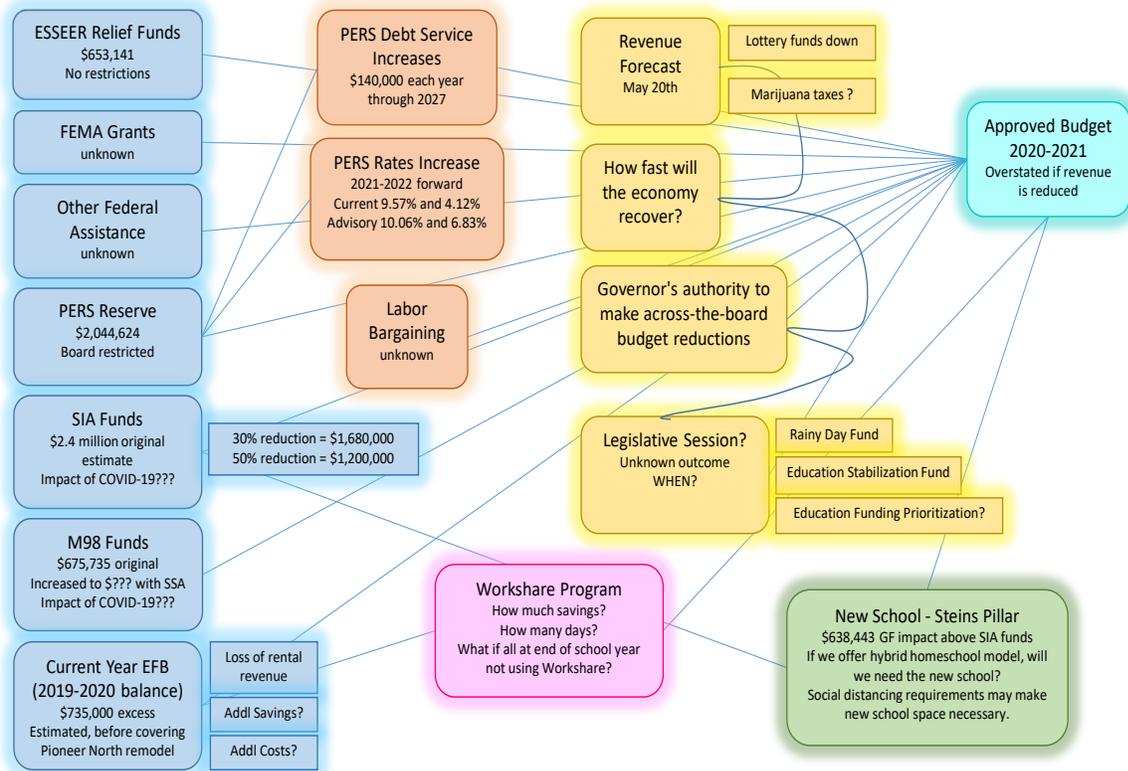
WorkShare allows:

- Temporary furloughs rather than layoffs.
- Allows you to spread the impact over a large number of employees while retaining jobs for the greatest number of people.
- Maintains benefits like health and dental insurance, which are important.
- Leverages federal CARES Act benefits.

The CARES Act shifts several critical elements of typical unemployment benefits through July 31, 2020:

- CARES Act offers \$600 each week for as little as \$1 of state unemployment benefits.
- Given that the weekly maximum in Oregon for UI benefits is \$648, with the CARES funding that increases the benefit to \$1,2489.
- It also takes the weekly minimum UI payment from \$1 and raises it to \$601.
- DOL guidance clarified that short-time compensation is eligible for the \$600 payment.

Director of Business and Finance Anna Logan stated that with all the things happening in the state and in the district there are a lot of variables. She has put them all together in the following graphic



We are looking at our current Year Ending Fund Balance and need to determine what we need to end the year. We are looking at \$735,000 EFB. That could change day-by-day. We are not receiving any rental revenue. However, we shouldn't have the cost for maintaining the buildings on the weekends, etc. if we were renting out facilities.

**Other Factors:**

- Normally, self-insured employer would absorb unemployment costs.
- DOL clarified that the CARES Act covers 100% of SHORT TERM COMPENSATION.
- Governors Order 20-20 – Section 4e added language:
  - Regularly pay public school employees, subject to budget and personnel decisions. This addition allows furlough days.
  - Governor waived the 1 week waiting period to qualify for unemployment benefits.
- Need to work with local unions to get agreement before making application to State.
- It is possible for some employees to receive more in unemployment benefits under this program than they are losing due to furlough day.
- District must make application and be approved.
- Eligible employees must have worked for the district for at least 6 months.
- Hours and FTE reductions can be between 20% and 40%
- Employer provides list of eligible employees to Employment Division
- Employee must complete short two-page initial claim form
- Employees must submit weekly timecards to District
- District files weekly.

Board Chair Scott Cooper asked for Board comments or questions.

Doug Smith: If we were to go forward with this proposal, we would save five days' wages per employee; however, we would not save PERS cost and all associated payroll costs. Anna stated that we would save APC, but not health insurance costs. In the General fund we estimate \$79,000 per day savings.

Patti Norris: Employees who have worked less than 6 months are not eligible. If we furloughed them instead of work-share, would we still have to pay the PERS? Anna indicated no, we would not be paying PERS.

Walt: Is the plan that LaGrande is following the same as Portland? Sara indicated that yes, it is the same plan.

Gwen: She had no questions at this time.

Scott: If we have teachers that are furloughed, does this affect the ADM? Anna indicated that no, it would not affect the ADM. Scott asked if there are any disruptions to staff income? We have heard about people waiting for weeks for their unemployment check. Patti Norris stated that it took three weeks for her husband to receive his first check after he submitted his paperwork.

Scott asked how this works through the end of the year and into July. Sara stated that the teacher contract is 190 days. Teachers would stop getting benefits when their contract days' end, and not through July 31.

Scott mentioned that it took Portland Public Schools a matter of days to get approved. How long would it take the rest of us? Anna stated that the day you submit your paperwork the clock starts ticking.

Scott asked Michelle Nelson how the union feels about this possible proposal. Michelle Nelson, CCEA Vice President, stated that bigger districts are jumping on this. The bottom line is we would have to come to an understanding with the District and sign an MOU. Public perception is important. Macy Hagensee, CCEA President, agreed that public perception is important. He added that there would be concern if we have people in our membership who had a three-week delay in receiving their check.

Scott asked if the administration had a recommendation. Sara stated that she has mixed feelings. It is good business. You pay insurance for this purpose. Some will say you are playing the system. Personally, she is looking at the interest of the district as a group to provide the best customer service and maintain relationships. It comes down to money, employees, and programs.

Anna stated that it would definitely be a savings potential. We will need some short-term staff to help implement everything. This will have an impact on our unemployment rate if we do this program. Our employees would have to take an action to file for unemployment. We would need to give them instruction. If the income is taxable, and they choose to not have taxes withheld, they may have to owe and pay taxes later.

Patti Norris added that the extra \$600 is not taxable. She added that she thinks that from the Board's perspective we have to look at what is best for kids and the district she doesn't begrudge an extra \$600 to staff. She is not opposed doing something this year that will have the least impact on students. If we had a choice of reducing services this year vs. reducing services next year, she would rather do it this year. She is willing to look at the options. She would like to see the scenarios and the savings.

Gwen stated that paychecks come out once a month. If the unemployment was filed the end of May or into June, staff wouldn't see a change because they would normally not be paid until the end of the month.

Walt would like to see it in action in other places first. However, his only concern is we do something quickly because it is our employees. They just want to know what is happening. He doesn't see anything wrong with this possibility. We need to make a decision now.

Doug stated he is not against saving money this year for next year. First of all, he thinks that between the administration team, certified and classified staff, we have to put a product out there that we can be very proud of. When you look at this whole thing and say we are going to serve our students, he would hate to disrupt what we currently have going on. Perhaps at the end of the school year when there is not a lot of engagement from our students, we may be able to start discussions with unions to see how we can make this work . . . but not disrupt what we are delivering to our students now.

Scott added that this will take two weeks for us to get ready, two weeks for the state to take a look at it. We are talking four weeks of pay. Why would we go through this which could affect when staff get paid? He does not feel the trade-off is worth it.

Patti stated that she is leaning more toward a furlough, rather than cutting days at the end of the year. She added that we are still obligated to provide meals, so she doesn't think we can furlough everyone on Fridays. Sara stated that we can double the food on Thursday to cover Friday.

Michelle Jonas stated that one day a week would be better than all the cut days at the end. It would be hard to get those students with incompletes.

Walt stated he has no problem with the furlough now through July, which is not a problem. The problem will be next year. We need to do planning for next year.

Jim Bates stated that if we do anything we need to do it sooner than later. Fridays are probably the day there is the least number of questions from parents and students.

Kurt Sloper said that school work coming back to the schools is about a week behind. Fridays would probably be the best day to take off.

Scott then took a poll of the Board members asking if they would like to see a proposal on the May 11 Board Agenda. Yes: Patti Norris, Gwen Carr, Walt Wagner. No: Doug Smith, Scott Cooper. The proposal will be added to the May 11 Board Agenda.

### **3.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

*Scott Cooper*

Scott Cooper, Board Chair

*Morgan Patrick, Jan Martin*

Morgan Patrick, Board Secretary  
Jan Martin, Board Secretary

5/11/2020

Dates Minutes Approved