



VERNONIA SCHOOLS PROJECT TEAM MEETING 1

**Vernonia, Oregon
April 22, 2008**

Participants

Tony Hyde, Oregon Solutions Co-Convener	Jim Krahn, Vernonia Public Schools
Tom Kelly, Oregon Solutions Co-Convener	Richard Krikava, Office of Senator Smith
Dan Brown, Vernonia Planning Commission	Rebecca McGaugh
Phil Carpenter	Donna Nyberg, Office of Rep. Brad Witt
Amy Cieloha	Randy Parrow, Vernonia City Council
Ken Cox, Vernonia Public Schools	Dawn Plews, Vernonia School District
Mark Ellsworth, Governor's ERT Team	Phil Sharp, NWRES D
Mark Farmer, West Coast Electric Cooperative	Gordon E. Smith, Sentry Market
Gary Fish, DLCD	Larry Steele, Cedar Ridge
James Gallagher, FEMA	Jim Tierney, Columbia Co. Flood Relief
Phyllis Gilmore, Providence Medical Group	Kim Wallace, Vernonia Public Schools
Bill Haack, Recovery Manager	Richard Whitman, DLCD
Georgia Irwin	
Tammy Jennings, Vernonia School district	

Oregon Solutions staff

Wendy Willis
Tobin Krell

I. Welcome and Call to Order

The co-conveners of the project, Commissioner Tony Hyde and Tom Kelly called the meeting to order. Mark Ellsworth, the Governor's staff person, began the meeting by reading Governor Kulongoski's letter of designation and emphasized the Governor's commitment and interest in coming to a mutually beneficial solution that will best serve the needs of the Vernonia community and the 47J School District. The letter greatly stressed that the parties involved must engage in collaborative efforts to best serve Vernonia schools. Copies of the letter were passed out. Co-conveners Tom Kelly and Commissioner Tony Hyde introduced themselves and their commitment to the process. Wendy Willis gave an overview of the mission and purpose of Oregon Solutions.

II. Introduction of Those in Attendance

Larry Steele-Cedar Ridge
Dan Brown Vernonia Planning Commission
Georgia Irwin
Richard Krikava of Senator Smith Gordon
Phil Sharp-NWRES D
Rebecca McGaugh

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James Gallagher- FEMA
Gary Fish- DLCD
Richard Whitman- DLCD
Randy Parrow- Vernonia City Counsel
Kim Wallace- Vernonia Public Schools
Phyllis Gilmore- Providence Medical Group
Jim Krahn – Vernonia Public Schools
Wendy Willis- Oregon Solutions
Mark Ellsworth- Governor’s ERT team
Ken Cox- Vernonia Public Schools
W. Mark Farmer- West Coast Electric Cooperative
Tammy Jennings
Donna Nyberg- on behalf of Rep. Brad Witt
Dawn Plews
Jim Tierney- Columbia Co. Flood Relief
Bill Haack- Recovery Manager
Amy Cieloha
Phil Carpenter
Tobin Krell- Oregon Solutions

III. Overview of the Process

Wendy Willis reviewed the general principles and ground rules of the process. Wendy explained what the Declaration of Cooperation entails. This is the end result of the collaborative process where the parties involved in an agreed upon solution pledge to follow through on commitments. The group agreed to build trust through fulfilling commitments. Everyone in attendance agreed to the general principles and ground rules. Commissioner Hyde proposed an additional ground rule: The team will encourage and consider creative and “out of the box” thinking. The ground rules were adopted. Commissioner Hyde emphasized that, while there are times when only team members can be involved in the deliberations, the meetings are all open to the public and that there will be a time at the end of each meeting when members of the public will be permitted to give input.

IV. Desired Outcomes:

- 1) Locate and site schools within district***
- 2) Minimize costs to the citizens of Vernonia***
- 3) Maximize financial opportunities from outside sources***
- 4) Look for multiple partners on the project***
- 5) Maximize education opportunities***
- 6) Develop a strategic communication policy***

V. Issues Surrounding Obstacles and Implementation of the Desired Outcomes

A. Location and siting of schools:

-Gordon Smith raised the issue of the lack of infrastructure currently in Vernonia, which led to a conversation on siting and zoning issues.

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-Commissioner Hyde brought up that according to the Land Use Bill (Senate Bill 100) communities must have a 20-year comprehensive plan, and that 1982 was the last time Vernonia had engaged in a comp. plan and is due for a revised growth plan.

-Richard Whitman, Director of DLCD raised the concern that the scope of the issues facing Vernonia is broad and emphasized that the community is at a point where the bigger picture needs to be addressed. New developments should be within the urban growth boundary; however, there is a process to change the current boundary. Mr. Whitman also stated that there is money available through DLCD, but he and Commissioner Hyde agreed that the process is very detailed. Mr. Whitman emphasized again that the larger issues must be addressed, but that there is room to look at more pointed issues, specifically the schools and is open to dialogue on the issue.

- Ken Cox, Superintendent of Vernonia Public Schools gave a report on initial proposed timelines for construction of a new school. Initial estimates are around 3 years for the construction of the institution with an additional year for permit approval.

-Tom Kelly stressed that other avenues need to be explored for a more expedited process for design and construction. Commissioner Hyde agreed that the process could be moved along more quickly.

- Ken Cox also stated that a main concern is that before the community can think about growth issues, it needs advancements on the school issue. From initial community meetings, one of the criteria for the school is that it stay at the center of the community. There have been five sites evaluated, some are within urban growth boundaries and some are outside of that area, however, there are different factors to be considered with regard to each site.

-Richard Whitman stated there is a need for a more detailed study, both in terms of location and in terms of legality. Due to the rural residential and forest status of land surrounding the urban growth boundary (w/in 3 mi.) that there may be a possibility for school zoning. Mr. Whitman said he will follow up on this issue, but believes it is most likely an urban growth issue.

-Gary Fish of DLCD also pointed out that if the school is zoned outside of the urban growth boundary that services would have to be extended to those areas as well.

-Ken Cox raised the issue of available land for the schools. Ken stated that the existing 21 acres is not enough and had been in the process of looking for more space.

-Kim Wallace brought up that there is not enough land anywhere within the urban growth boundary for an acceptable site for the school.

-Richard Whitman said that having already researched possibilities is a great step in the process of helping the case for options outside of the boundary.

-Gordon Smith raised the issue of perhaps raising the schools on the current site. There were legal and perceptual concerns associated with this option, but it was agreed to be discussed in greater detail within the Siting Committee.

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B. Funding and collaborative options

-Wendy Willis brought up that if the buildings to be built were maximized for other community services besides K-12, there would be more interest from other funding sources.

-Commissioner Hyde stressed that this is an opportunity to create a more sustainable, ecologically friendly buildings and that this would attract funding from many sources that otherwise would not be interested. The Department of Energy, for one, has grants for 'green buildings.' He also mentioned talk of having an OSU training facility in the area, and that there would be a representative from OSU on the team.

-A question was raised about possible FEMA money to which Commissioner Hyde replied that there is approximately \$8-10 million to be distributed. However, the estimated costs across the county are around \$70 million and the FEMA money is to be distributed to property owners as well, so there is not much likelihood that there will be much money specifically for this project.

-There was also a question raised about the County Flood Account. Commissioner Hyde again stressed that the money (\$260,000) is to be divided equally among the many communities across the county affected. Additionally this money is being used very strategically to leverage against the mitigation money to homeowners.

-Commissioner Hyde also emphasized the need for a narrative to garner support from potential sources of funding.

B.1. Time sensitive funding opportunities

- Richard Whitman said that there is \$75-100,000 tentatively budgeted for planning for this project but it must be spent or it will be lost. He said he could extend the deadline a month or two.

- Richard Krikava stated that earmark timelines have passed. He said he would follow up on other legislative funding possibilities as they come.

C. Educational Opportunities

-Commissioner Hyde mentioned talk of having an OSU training facility in the area, and that there would be a representative from OSU on the team.

-Ken Cox also stressed that they wanted facilities that were high-tech to meet the needs of the students.

-Kim Wallace said there is a report ready and waiting for approval to allow for satellite classes through PCC.

- Marc Farmer should know within the next 90 days on the outcome of fiber optics ran to the community.

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D. Current Status of the Vernonia Schools

-Ken Cox handed out the Legislative Report for the district and took the team on a tour of the affected buildings.

VI. Next Steps/assignments

A) Commissioner Hyde was appointed to be the lead spokesperson with the media to the project.

B) Siting Committee:

Assignment:

- 1 proposed list of criteria for siting (technical and community based)
- 2 proposed timeline for decision and process
- 3 what sites should be eliminated
- 4 what sites should be added
- 5 questions for the larger team

Members of Siting Committee:

Dan Brown, Chair
Steve Bryant, Oregon Solutions Staff
Ken Cox
Aldie Howard
Tony Hyde
Jim Krahn
Gordon E. Smith
Kim Wallace
Richard Whitman

C) Time line will be discussed next meeting once the Siting Committee has come to some conclusions.

D) Bridges has been asked to produce a narrative for the project and they have agreed.

E) Produce a project description. (Wendy Willis)

VII. Next Meeting

When: Tuesday, May 27, 1:30 p.m.

Where: Scout Cabin, Vernonia

Agenda Items:

- Report from Siting Committee
- Reaction to Project Description
- Discussion of Funding Priorities and Options

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