



**Vernonia Schools – Oregon Solutions Steering Committee
Metropolitan Group Offices, Portland
November 19 2009 Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Dan Brown (Vernonia Planning Commission), Ken Cox (VSD Superintendent), John Donovan (Metropolitan Group), Ed Edwards (OSEA), Steve Effros (Aadland Evans), Eric Friedenwald-Fishman (Metropolitan Group), Bill Haack (Col-PAC), Josette Hugo (Rep Witt), Tony Hyde (Col County Commissioner & OS co-convenor), Sen. Betsy Johnson, Tom Kelly (Neil Kelly & OS co-convenor), Alissa Keny-Guyer (Oregon Solutions), Jim Krahn (VSD Board Chair), Kelly Marx (PCC Rockcreek), Steve Marx (Rep. Wu), Mary McArthur (ED, Col-PAC), Betsy Miller (VSD fundraising asst), Dawn Plews (VSD Business Manager), Sarah Rubin (PSU intern, recorder), Lynn Schoessler (Dep Director, OBDD)

Co-convenor Tony Hyde welcomed members and asked for introductions.

VSD Superintendent Ken Cox, assisted by project manager Steve Effros, gave an overview and slide presentation of the new school design and the construction timeline. With the passage of the \$13 million bond on Nov 3 and the anticipation of loans in place by this spring, the goal is to pull permits in April to break ground in June '10.

Eric Friedenwald-Fishman assisted by John Donovan, both from Metropolitan Group, distributed a draft of their campaign strategy for discussion. A key element to be completed by mid December is the Case for Support: frame the problem and level of need, provide sound strategy and campaign “rhythm,” build excitement around innovation, reinforce Vernonia’s commitment, identify the local and broader benefits, and underscore role and responsibility of broader community. The entire Oregon Solutions team will use the Case for Support to give a consistent message about the project (“message discipline”).

Campaign Materials will include letterhead stationary, note cards, business cards, a kit for volunteer leadership, E-updates, campaign information with photos, a customized communication toolkit for media, and possibly a video (pro-bono).

Standing committees: Public and private sector and steering committee will meet monthly to identify targets and strategy, and to track progress. “Standing cultivation activities” every 4-6 weeks will provide sense of urgency to make calls.

Ad hoc task forces to oversee budget and fiscal management will include: Bridge Finance Committee (already underway), Fiscal Agent committee (by 1/1/10), Gift Acceptance committee to meet when needed or when exceptions come up.

The strategy will include “named recognition” for private donors needs to be balanced with community/State contributions. Big donors can receive mementos from the old school buildings.

The campaign phases will consist of:

- Campaign Readiness: 11/09-1/10
- Short term awareness and (Vernonia) family cultivation: 12/09-2/10
- Leadership Gifts: over \$500,000: 1/10-6/11
- Major gifts: \$25,000-\$500,00: 6/10-9/10
- Community gifts: 9/10-9/12

Public Financing Committee Update: Met on Nov 13, 2009: Sen Betsy Johnson, Tony Hyde, David Porter, Josette Hugo, Maribeth Healey Fritz Graham, Steve Marx, Mark Ellsworth, Ken Cox, Dawn Plews, Bill Haack, Steve Effros, John Donovan, Alissa Keny-Guyer, Sarah Rubin (recorder).

Steve Marx (Rep Wu’s office) reported about the federal funds we are tracking/targeting: Oregon Way (ARRA) federal stimulus funds, State Stabilization Funds (got one time funds last year), Qualified School Construction Bonds (application approved, allows us to sell bonds interest free), USDA loans, School Building Fairness Act, Earmark Requests.

Federal Legislation: 21st Century High Performing Schools (passed the House and now being drafted by the Senate HELP Committee) will contain funds for energy efficiency; 5% is for disaster recovery in the House bill. We need language favorable to Vernonia.

Sen. Betsy Johnson reported on the State funding focus: We will know more after the Jan 26 election for Measures 66 & 67 on the state revenue, Capitol Construction Bond Capacity, Direct Appropriations, Silos, ARRA, Promise of Governor support, OSCA, OEA (Affinity Groups). Sen. Johnson and Steve Effros will meet with Brian Shipley.

David Porter, Dept. of Commerce, encouraged a “Catalytic” Focus: Steve Effros will invite university, NWRES D and nonprofit partners to develop the concept for the Oregon Natural Resource Lab,: 1st net zero lab building-as a MODEL, Math and Science opportunities for K-12, undergrad and graduate students, economic development and regional benefits (shouldn’t interfere with other support from donor interest in Science and Math).

Bridge Finance committee update: Met on Nov 17, 2009: Neal Sacon (United Fund Advisors), Mike Schofield (CFO, NWRES D), Carol Samuels & Mary MacPherson (Seattle NW Securities), Shelly Haack (PDC), Eric Friedenwald-Fishman & John Donovan (Metropolitan Group), Bill Haack (Col-Pac), Steve Effros (Aadland-Evans), Ken Cox & Dawn Plews (Vernonia School District), Alissa Keny-Guyer (Oregon Solutions), Sarah Rubin (PSU, recorder)

Bill Haack reported on the types of bridge loans and loan guarantors being explored:

- Hard Debt from Banks: rigorous qualifications and payments with interest and principle
- Loan Guarantee: similar but easier to ease into, softens hard debt (State support)

--Soft Debt: from Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI). Interest only, no principle; MRI/PRI from foundations
--Equity will reduce exposure to debt: Grants, early donations, fed/state \$, bonds

The Columbia County process of identifying county priorities (Vernonia Schools were #1 last year) will be conducted again by early January; this will help public and private funders target their funds to a publicly identified high priority need.

People to invite for input into the bridge financing discussion: John Burgess (Clatsop County Community College) did creative financing; Ben Westlund, Sen, Ginny Burdick, Phil Barnhart, Dale Penn, David Williams, Susan Castillo, Ed Dennis, Randall Edwards, Kate Richardson, and John Berdes (Shorebank Enterprise Cascadia).