

# Salida School District R-32-J

## Board of Education

January 9, 2024

Crest Academy, 627 Oak Street

### Work Session - Oak Street Facility Annexation and Site Development

President Smith started the work session at 4:37 p.m. Also in attendance were Directors Jodi Breckenridge Petit, Matt Hobbs, Mandy Paschall, Jenn Shuchman, and Ben Hill, Superintendent David Blackburn, Assistant Superintendent Will Wooddell, Business Manager Aaron Dobson, and Board Secretary Kim LeTourneau. Also in attendance were Greg Cromer of DLR and John Diesslin and Jacob Schoenfeld (Jake) from DSI to answer any questions about the most recent version of site plans for 627 Oak Street. Superintendent Blackburn reviewed the process used to meet legal requirements to post an RFP which awarded the project to DLR to remodel 627 Oak Street to create space for Horizons Exploratory Academy. The goal is to meet all legal requirements, provide a safe, fresh space for HEA students, and with minimal cost to the District.

The group started by reviewing the exterior plans for the site and discussed opportunities to align updates in partnership with the City of Salida as there are planned improvements to Oak, Illinois, and Scott Streets. There are also important conversations going on related to annexation of the 627 Oak Street property into the City of Salida and related requirements and costs for that process. There was discussion about parking, outdoor classroom space, traffic flow, and potential space for District storage needs.

The conversation was then directed to plans for the interior remodel of the building. The design features separation of the two alternative schools for safety, and focus on age-appropriate programming. There were several key areas of interest, including security vestibules/man traps at the entrance of both schools, the design of the bathrooms for the two schools, and price points for different variations on the kitchen design. The schools must meet state code, which includes required fire suppression systems/sprinklers, and potential upgrades to meet energy efficiency requirements, which add cost to the project. There are several items that could be planned for now, and be completed with future capital projects. This would allow for the remodel to get underway to get HEA students into their new campus in time for the start of the 2024-25 school year, and keep the budget for the project in check.

Superintendent Blackburn will continue to move forward with the feedback from the worksession per the Board's request.

The Board took a short break.

### Regular Board Meeting

President Smith called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. The **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited.

In **attendance** were Directors Jodi Breckenridge Petit, Ben Hill, Matt Hobbs, Mandy Paschall, Jenn Schuchman, and Joe Smith, Superintendent David Blackburn, Secretary Kim LeTourneau, Assistant Superintendent Will Wooddell, and Business Manager Aaron Dobson. Director Lundberg was in attendance via a phone connection. Also in attendance were Stacia Kriebel, Evalyn Parks, Mary Christensen, Dawn Catalano, Cory Scheffel, Theresa Gilson, Jesse Hull, Abigail Cooksey, Kate Clark, and Guinnevere Stropes. In addition, around 40 students from SHS attended.

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Director Breckenridge Petit opened **Board Member Comments** with her concern about the timeline to complete the leave policy audit and any priorities within Policy G book. CBT dates and a schedule for the Board to meet are both in place with a goal to get through the process to meet budget deadlines in May.

Director Smith shared that he sent an email to the community earlier in the day with more detailed information about property taxes and recent changes that may impact taxpayers and the District. He thanked everyone who helped get this email to the community.

The only **Written Message to the Board** was a letter from CDE regarding FY 2022-23 Audit and Financial December Data Pipeline Submission, which noted a clean audit and no further action or response was needed.

The only **Public Comment** was Evalyn Parks who thanked the Board for their work and shared an invite to visit the bus barn on February 14 for school bus driver appreciation day.

Director Paschall made a motion to **Approval the Agenda with the following changes:**

- i) Remove Items 3b Claims Payable - All funds, and 3c Claims Payable - Bills over \$20,000
- ii) Table Item 3gi - 3rd Reading of CHCA - Handbook and Directives to February 13, 2024 meeting

Director Schuchman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mr. Hobbs, yes; Mrs. Lundberg, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and was approved.

### Reports

CMC Vice President & Campus Dean of CMC Leadville & Salida Ben Cairns and CMC Salida Associate Dean of Academics and Student Affairs Rob Simpson shared a guest report focusing on the exciting partnership between CMC and Salida Schools. CMC continues to look for new courses and pathways to support student growth and development, including ski area operations, enhanced opportunities in construction and the trades, education, Spanish, and healthcare. He thanked the team of Fred Maxwell and Keri Vignale for their work in supporting local students. Maxwell has been instrumental in developing a strong partnership with local businesses to provide internships, while Vignale helps students maximize the opportunities available through concurrent enrollment classes. Summer classes are available to students that include outdoor leadership, heavy equipment training, and Colorado history. More students are taking advantage of the opportunity to leverage concurrent enrollment and graduate high school while obtaining an associates degree simultaneously. There has also been an increased interest in the Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) program which is a fifth-year high school program that allows students to participate in concurrent enrollment the year after 12th grade, to enroll in postsecondary courses and earn college credit at no tuition cost to them or their families. Simpson offered copies of the CMC common reader selection for the year, Bill of Obligations by Richard Haass, that has been incorporated into several SHS classrooms as well. CMC continues to look for grants, partnerships and programs to enhance the opportunities available to students and the community.

SHS Principal Jesse Hull began **Campus Reports** with a breakout session that partnered board members with SHS

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students for Q&A time from 6:55-7:35 p.m. President Smith said it was a highlight to get to talk to students and get feedback from them directly. Principal Hull led a debriefing session and asked Directors what they heard from students. Overall, student comments reflected a sense of connectedness and feeling cared for by staff at the high school. They felt they could go to any of their teachers with a problem (both for academic questions and social/emotional support). Students expressed an interest in what the Board does and curiosity about how they could become more involved. When asked what they would change, most students said they wouldn't change anything, and appreciate the changes that have been made in recent years. They did identify Advisory and better understanding of the capstone project and learning communities (pathways) as areas that could use improvement. As these are recent adjustments for staff as well, this is an understandable area of growth. The Board expressed excitement and appreciation for the work being done at Salida High School by staff and students.

Principal Hull then shared a detailed report with the Board including the history, mission, and strengths of SHS, with a primary goal of taking care of kids academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. He noted that recent changes in office space in the building have created significant improvement for the SHS community, including the counseling center and activities condo, which allowed for changes in the front office. He recognized the suggestions from students in the breakout sessions and expressed that changes take three to five years to be fully realized, and SHS is in year one. Counselors Mary Christensen and Dawn Catalano shared their work to make sure students feel safe and connected while helping them consider their learning goals and planning a future. A number of partners, including CMC, Salida PD and SRO, SolVista, DHS, the Booster Clubs, FYI, and others support that sense of connection as well. Students are encouraged to participate in extracurriculars from athletics, to performing and visual arts, as there is clear evidence that kids who participate feel connected and reach more benchmarks of success in school and beyond. Hull talked about new staff, new classes, and the opportunities for students to really pursue their interests within the structure provided. The Board had several questions about potential position requests, and thoughts on how to continue to support the goals and achievements happening at the school. The goal to know every kid by name and by need is happening, and Hull shared they are having fun doing just that.

Superintendent Blackburn opened **District Reports** with a pause to remember the loss of several young community members in recent weeks, noting the impact to students and staff and the need for healing and processing.

Aaron Dobson then shared some updates on the procurement of the 0% cash loan from the state. He said there have been a number of questions and is a need for clarification on the process. It was confirmed that the District would need to have \$0 in cash on hand before the loan can be issued, and has been directed to use reserved BEST cash before the loan can be issued. These reserved funds will be replaced when funding from taxes is realized to the District. Dobson expressed that he continues to feel comfortable with the loan, but it has a steep learning curve and additional work that needs to be done in the business office related to the process. There are other districts also learning how to navigate the process, and there will likely be more clarification available as those new to the process have questions.

Director Paschall made a motion to approve the **Consent Agenda** to include the following items:

- b) Approval of Minutes of Regular Board Meeting on December 12, 2023
- c) ~~Claims Payable All Funds~~ (February Meeting will include transactions dated back to Dec report)
- d) ~~Claims Payable Bills over \$20,000~~ (February Meeting will include transactions dated back to Dec report)
- e) Personnel Items
- f) Acknowledge and Approve Exhibits and Regulations as Recommended by the Superintendent

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- (i) EJ-R - Service Animals
- (ii) EJ-E-1- Service Animals
- (iii) EJ-E-2 - Service Animals
- (iv) EJ-E-3- Service Animals
- g) Approve on 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Policies - None
- h) Approve on 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Policies
- ~~(i) CHCA Handbook and Directives (Tabled to the February 13, 2024 meeting)~~

Director Hill seconded the motion. Director Breckenridge Petit asked for clarification on the claims payable, which will be presented at the February because of limited transactions while the District was on the two-week winter break. Director Lundberg was no longer available by phone and did not participate in further votes for the evening. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mr. Hobbs, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and was approved.

### Discussion Items

The first discussion was to look at the possibility of identifying all positions as “**Hard to Fill**” based on the cost of housing in a rural district, which would allow for staff members to retire, receive PERA, and reapply for the position they retired from at a lower step. There is no guarantee that a staff member would be re-hired, as the position would have to be posted. The Board would like Superintendent Blackburn to learn a bit more about how it might benefit those staff members who have hit the ceiling in the pay scale, and help manage the budget. If the research indicates it would make sense for the District, the Board will expect an action item at the February meeting.

The Board then discussed the **options to sell 310 E. 9th Street (HEA/Former Admin)** and the **Spartan Heights duplex**. President Smith shared he wants to make sure the Board evaluates the District assets and makes sure they have the right assets for the future. The funds from the sale of these properties would be rolled back into the improvements and annexation of 627 Oak Street. There are considerations with the sale of 310 E. 9th Street, as there will need to be considerable changes to the network systems currently in place to support the District as a whole, and assurance that HEA students have a campus through the end of the school year until the remodel of Oak is complete. There is also a condo/4-plex that the Board has discussed selling, with hope for a community partnership that retains the affordable housing opportunity it provides. The next step is to provide an action item related to the possible option to sell the duplex and 310 E 9th street. Blackburn will host a staff listening session on January 16 to answer any questions from staff about the master facility planning process.

### Action Items

There were no 2nd reading policies.

Director Paschall made a motion to **Approve the Mill Levy Certification as provided and Resolution 202324-05**. Director Schuchman seconded the motion. The District thanks Chaffee and Fremont Counties for their work, and to everyone in the front office who helped prepare this resolution. Dobson noted an overall decrease in mills from last year. Additional information will be included in the Annual Report to the Community that will be in mailboxes in coming days. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mr. Hobbs, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and was approved.

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Director Hill made a motion to **Approve the Amended '23-'24 Budget and the Associated Appropriation Resolution 202324-06**. Director Schuchman seconded the motion. Dobson said that there had been a number of changes that were navigated to come to the final budget and associated resolution. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mr. Hobbs, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and was approved.

Director Hobbs made a motion to **Approve the Pre-Annexation Agreement for 627 Oak Street**. Director Schuchman seconded the motion. Superintendent Blackburn started discussion acknowledging this is the next step to move towards annexation into the City. Director Hobbs asked if there had been any work to negotiate any fees, and currently the City approaches the annexation for the school district in the same way it would any other developer, which is the same process they worked through with the fire department on the property north of 627 Oak. Blackburn recommended BOE directors reach out to city council members to see if there was a better way to manage taxpayer dollars in the best interest of the community. There will be opportunities for community engagement in this process as well. Said motion was voted on as follows: Dr. Breckenridge Petit, yes; Dr. Hill, yes; Mr. Hobbs, yes; Mrs. Paschall, yes; Ms. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and was approved.

### **Board Communications and Committee Reports**

Director Paschall said that there would be a **BOCES** meeting the following week and she would have an update at the February BOE meeting.

There were no further **Facilities Committee** updates. Superintendent Blackburn shared that he did send a contract to the County for review for the land in Poncha Springs, and his continuing work with CMC to review potential agreements that will keep them at the Kesner building for the long term.

Director Schuchman, member of the **Communications Committee**, thanked Kim LeTourneau and those who helped get the Annual Report done and into mailboxes. Director Hobbs would like to discuss some additional ways to connect with the community, including a regular email from the Board. He sent the Board a sample of what it could look like and wants to continue the conversation on the best ways to communicate with the community.

Director Schuchman shared an update that the presentations from the annual **CASB** convention were now all available online. She said there was a winter legislative conference, but wasn't sure if it would provide the value of travel and hotel costs. Superintendent Blackburn is traveling to the capital next week for CASE and will have more perspective if it might be helpful for someone from the District to attend the winter conference.

Director Hill said that there is a **DAC** meeting scheduled for January 24th to discuss financial planning and talk through any concerns.

Work continues on the **Policy Audit**, with Section G scheduled for the February meeting, and Sections E and F scheduled for March. Blackburn will get the framework set up to make sure to meet deadlines connected to work being done concurrently with CBT so the District is prepared to move forward with budget deadlines in May.

### **Future Business and Calendar of events**

- i) **January 20, 2023**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. 2nd Floor Conference, 627 Oak Street; Annual Retreat/Work Session, Director Paschall will guide the Superintendent Evaluation

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ii) **February 13, 2024**, 4:30 Work Session on Capital Project, 6 p.m. Regular Meeting of the Board, The Crest Academy

(a) Agenda Review - Director Breckenridge Petit

It was noted there may be a need for additional meetings in coming months to meet all necessary deadlines on budget and facility planning processes.

Director Schuchman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kim LeTourneau, Board Secretary



Joe Smith, Board President