



## **BOLTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

MINUTES: Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Library /Zoom Hybrid Meeting

**Meeting Called to Order: Patrick Hogan:** 7:03 PM

**Welcome to Attendees:** 32 in person & 11 online members, 1 city council member, 1 guest speaker

**Draft September 17, 2024 Minutes:** Started going step by step through September minutes, motion made to approve, but we continued to peruse. Eventually approved.

**Draft Agenda:** Approved

**Treasurer's Report: Alfred Brown:** Bank Balance: \$4211.55. Expenses included: \$250 donation to Bolton Jog-a-thon and sign printing. Received: \$1620.10 grant from the city.

### **Updates:**

- **Tanner Woody** made statement about making sure we as an association are listening and uplifting people, in response to some remarks disregarding community ideas in the past month.
- **Communications Coordinator:** Reminder that in the bylaws it states the BNA is to be a resource of information in the community. List serve up to 161
- **Bolton Volunteer Garden (BVG):** Vince Miles and Amanda Brookshire have been working in the BVG pruning unhealthy plants and trying to keep blackberries out. They are generally there Wednesdays between 9-12. Anyone is welcome to join, or just drop in the BVG garden with sheers if they see something that needs done.
- **Vision 43 Presentation by project manager Chris Meyers:** The City of West Linn and the community are reimagining the corridor on Hwy 43 between Lake Oswego and I205. The project is about zoning on Highway 43, determining what we will allow, ie. what we want to see. (Project 43 is not about the road or the potholes.) As West Linn continues to grow, we need to make sure we are shaping our growth in a way the community wants; looking at things like the density of housing allowed (consider the population in relation to school numbers) and the zoning of what type of building can take place in the corridor (ie. mixed use development). The 2024 phase focused on public engagement: comments on maps, and events to gather commentary. 2025 will focus on drafting a plan, new development code (that can only be what the community says), and the process of public hearings. Project Planners are starting to visualize collected data with renderings that will be available next time he presents to us! Corridor transportation studies will be undergone, and the state is going through a housing assessment. Vision 43 is all about evaluating where we are now, and visualizing where we want to go. During this process, they heard from the community the desire for more crosswalks,

sidewalks, maintaining open spaces. Tonight we are still questioning if the WLWV school district is aware of the Vision 43 project. Please go to the west linn website [yourwestlinn.com/vision43](http://yourwestlinn.com/vision43). October 2025 is when the plan is slated to be presented to City council.

### **New Business:**

- **Fall Carved Pumpkin Contest:** Finalized last details of Carved Pumpkin Contest. Pat Hogan bringing tables, Amanda Brookshire has prizes all ready, Lisa Wolff bringing tickets and signage for pumpkin voting. Flyers printed and hung by Vince Miles. Encourage everyone to bring a carved pumpkin, get a prize, and visit with our neighbors October 27th!
- **Christi Lanz; Small School Alliance (SSA) Presentation:** Earlier this year, the WLWV School District set up a task force to decide if Bolton, Cedaroak, and Stafford should stay open. The decision by the School Board is slated to be made in 90 days. Decision criteria focus is on core costs, renovation needs, and impacts on programs when schools become “too small.”
- **Closed Meetings:** SSTF meetings are closed to the public, potentially violating ORS public meeting laws. However, community meetings are open for attendance (see below). SSTF is only collecting public opinion and only look at data. These amazing group of parent volunteers selected by the PTA's only have a narrow scope they are allowed to consider and have no authority, just passing information (that the community has commented should have been gathered and questions asked and answered before the recommendation to close schools was over suggested) to the LRPC that will then report back to the school board with recommendations.
- **Mediation by 3J Consulting:** The SSTF meetings are mediated by 3J Consulting, a development engineering and planning firm that previously worked on Athey Creek and Frog Pond projects.
- **Budget Discrepancies:** The district reported an initial \$4 million deficit, which rose to \$10 million. The actual shortfall is closer to \$14 million, though this hasn't been officially admitted.
- **Despite claims of reduced state funding, projections indicate increased funding this year.**
- **Inflation and contract miscalculations only explain about \$3 million of the deficit.**
- **Budget Waste:** The district spends millions annually on software, a unique expense among districts. There are numerous other budget inefficiencies; balancing the budget without cutting teachers or programs is achievable.
- **Cushion Underestimated:** Even with the shortfall, the district anticipates a \$6 million reserve by year-end, typically underestimated by \$10 million, likely leaving a \$16 million cushion.
- **Flawed Report:** A report from Flo Analytics, using outdated 2010-2020 census data, is driving task force decisions. The district says enrollment is going down, but a Nasa data analyst looked at their Flo Analytics report and saw grade school enrollment increases (shown clearly on their own reports). This data is also missing recent births and families recently moved to the area. Updated census data will be available in December, after the task force concludes.
- **Top Schools:** Bolton ranks as the #1 primary school in the district and #10 in the state of 1274 schools, followed closely by Cedaroak and Stafford.

### **Facts about school closures:**

1. **Property Values:** When a neighborhood school closes, property values in the area typically drop by an average of 10%.
2. **Community Impact:** Closing a school often disrupts the sense of community, as schools act as hubs for local activities and events, leading to less community cohesion.
3. **Family Relocation:** Families frequently move to neighborhoods with open, accessible schools. Closing schools reducing community stability and increasing turnover rates.

4. Local Economy: School closures can negatively impact local businesses that rely on school-related traffic, including coffee shops, daycare centers, and other small businesses.
5. Transportation Costs: Families face increased transportation costs, and districts may need to budget for additional busing if students are displaced to more distant schools.
6. Student Performance: Studies show that school closures can negatively impact student performance, especially for younger students who may struggle with new environments.
7. Class Size: Remaining schools often experience overcrowding, with increased class sizes that can strain resources and impact the quality of education.
8. Environmental Impact: Longer commutes to more distant schools can increase carbon emissions, impacting the local environment and contributing to traffic congestion.
9. Long-Term Costs: Districts may face unexpected expenses to maintain or repurpose closed buildings, which can add unforeseen long-term costs to their budgets.
10. Community Sentiment: School closures often lead to distrust and dissatisfaction with district leadership, especially if the decision-making process lacks transparency.

Everyone can help our small schools by staying informed and speaking up: go to the school board, SSTF, and LRPC, and community meetings to tell them what the school means to you. Tell them, if they close schools, what actions will you take. Will you vote no on the bond? Move out? Tell them why you live here. Email board members, attend board and community meetings, sign the petition to delay decisions: (<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/755/958/936/slow-down-the-school-closure-process/>), follow SSA on Substack (<https://substack.com/@wlschools>), and on Facebook (Go to Facebook and search Small Schools Alliance).

Please visit WLWV website for the districts plan; make sure to view FAQ's section as well as the data presented by FLO Analytics: <https://www.wlww.k12.or.us/Page/17358>. Stay informed.

**Please take note of important dates:** Board Meeting: November 4 at 6 p.m.

Community Meetings: November 7, 6 p.m. (Virtual) November 8, 6 p.m. at Trillium Creek Primary for all community members. November 13, 6 p.m. at Rosemont Ridge Middle School (new Town Hall Q&A format)

**Follow up community Discussion:**

- o Talk of Capital Bonds coming up in February: Rolling over is normal, but will they be able to pass another bond if our school's close?
  - o John McCabe disputes some FLO Analytics projections, and suggests a reason they need to close a primary school in 25-26 school year is to fill Frog Pond where housing is projected, but not currently populated with kids. Questions the million in bond money that went to 10 staff members. A 7 million reduction in general fund will look bad and ODE is being investigated. Looking into the 2024 analytics.
  - o Q: What's the district's end game with the suggestion to close school's. Is it equity, that everyone has shiny new buildings? Cost of new building vs repair and upkeep in regards of fairness...
  - o Suggestion to advertise for the mandarin program at Bolton.
  - o Bolton is the oldest standing School in West Linn and deserves to be a historic building.
- **Printing:** Idea to pass out fliers at the high school football game. Motion made by Bob McCarthy for BNA pay to have fliers printed. Motion passed, all in favor, to allocate \$300 in BNA funds to print postcards to pass out.

- **Next Meeting:** November 19, 2024

### **Future Agenda Items:**

- Continue the conversation about possible school closures in West Linn with the community members. Keep everyone informed and continue to help the community organize against the threat of losing the school at the heart of our community.
- Community is expecting update on the cities response to our inquiry about the intersection of Burns St. and Cascade and about the parking on Burns Street.
- Vision 43: Chris Myers will be back sometime soon to show us some initial renderings of Vision 43 project the city put together through community input. Visit <https://yourwestlinn.com/vision43>

### **Announcements:**

- Keep up with West Linn Waterfront Project: Please Check out: [www.westlinnwaterfrontproject.com](http://www.westlinnwaterfrontproject.com) to see the maps and details. Watch for the cities dates for the project.
- West Linn Garden Club meets the 1st Monday of each month at West Linn Lutheran Church. Become part of one of the oldest garden clubs in Oregon!
- Work Party at Maddax Woods every 3rd Saturday 9-12am. [Bring your work gloves and join us!] <https://volunteer.solveoregon.org/opportunity/a0CVL0000D5RCF2A3/maddax-woods-monthly-cleanup>
- Get the West Linn Weekly Newsletter. <https://westlinnoregon.gov/e-news>

**Adjourn: 8:57 pm** Thank you, everyone, for participating.

**Reminder:** Stay up to date with your Bolton Neighborhood by visiting our community website at

<https://westlinnoregon.gov/bolton> and on our BNA Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BoltonNeighborhoodAssociation?mibextid=ZbWKwL>

**See BNA Hot Topics:** <https://westlinnoregon.gov/bolton/hot-topics-announcements> :

Patrick Hogan, President at: [BoltonNA@WestLinnOregon.gov](mailto:BoltonNA@WestLinnOregon.gov)

Bolton Neighborhood Association Board Members

Patrick Hogan, President; Vince Miles, Vice President; Alfred Brown, Treasurer;

Amanda Brookshire, Secretary; Lisa Wolff, Member at Large

### **Background overview of the meeting conversation on the Small Schools Task Force (SSTF):**

The WLWV school board appointed a long range planning committee (LRPC). FLO Analytics was contracted to give enrollment projections. Their data was presented in July, and after analysis, the district decided to look into the viability of the smaller schools in our community (i.e. possibility of closing small schools to save money). The LRPC had district staff establish a small schools task force made up of 12 people (3 from each of the proposed schools to be closed, and 1 from each of the remaining schools) to give recommendation back to the LRPC in December as to if/which school should be closed and how boundaries should be adjusted. The LRPC is scheduled to make a recommendation back to the school board in January.