

Position 4: Jeana Gonzales and Debbie Hays

Debbie Ethell <debbieethell@gmail.com>
to jeanagonzales4ocschoolboard, hays.debs ▾

Tue, Apr 13, 1:05 PM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Dear Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Hays:

I am writing an upcoming article to be published in the Oregon City News in regards to the position you are both running for election for: Oregon City School Board - Position 4, and will publish one week from today on (April 20, 2021). If you could please send me your answers to the following questions by April 19, 2021 I would appreciate it. If not, I will print that you declined to answer.

You may already be aware that there are multiple on-going state-wide investigations opened against the Oregon City equestrian team coach (known as OHSET) Angie Wacker, the current Athletic Director, Andy Jones, the Principal Carey Wilhelm, and the Superintendent Larry Didway over their handling of complaints made by parents against coach Wacker which include severe bullying, harassment, cyber-stalking, not reporting serious injuries...to name a few, against only female student athletes. This past January Mrs. Wacker was unanimously convicted by the ethics commission of four ethics violations for "self dealing" among other things. No other coach in Oregon history has ever been convicted of so many at one time. The investigative report provided to the Oregon City School Board by Mr. Jones (a report according to district policy was in fact supposed to be prepared by Mr. Didway) was almost entirely lifted (copy/pasted word-for-word) from emails Mrs. Wacker sent to Mr. Jones. I have attached a copy of the report for your review: the portions highlighted in yellow are the segments of Mrs. Wacker's emails which made it into Mr. Jones's report without attribution. For reference, the plagiarized emails can be found behind the report itself. I have also included several recent articles written about this incident below for your review. Yet, despite all of this, coach Wacker (a volunteer coach) continues on in her current position coaching both OHSET and 4-H clubs at Oregon City High School as does the athletic director.

I would like to ask you each the same questions in regards to this:

- 1) How would you handle a situation similar to this if you are elected to the Oregon City School Board?
- 2) Would you take the time to read any/all investigative reports provided to you in regards to any coach (volunteer or otherwise) accused of abusing female students? And what steps would you take if you in fact discovered the report was obviously falsified?
- 3) How comfortable do you feel in standing up to fellow board members and/or the Superintendent if you disagree on an issue or how the process is being handled?
- 4) How comfortable do you feel in making sure district policies are followed as they are written? (In this case, numerous District 62 policies were either ignored or not followed properly).
- 5) Will you make a commitment to understanding/reading the District #62 school policies in regards to how proper procedures within the district should be followed as well as ensure they are same for female student athletes as they are for male student athletes?

Article #1: ["State Nails Oregon City High School Coach on Ethics Violations"](#)

Article #5: ["Oregon City School Board Now Subject to State Ethics Probe"](#)

Article #7: ["Oregon Equestrian Coach Likely Author of Own Investigation"](#)

Article #8: ["DA Orders Oregon City School District to Release Audio of Illegal Vote"](#)

Article #10: ["Oregon City School District Apologizes for Illegal Board Vote"](#)

I would like to thank you both for your time and attention to this matter.

Best,
Debbie Ethell



On Wed, Apr 14, 2021 at 9:50 AM Jeana Gonzales <jeanagonzales4ocschoolboard@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Debbie,

Thank you for reaching out. Due to the pending investigation and potential litigation, I will not be making any comments at this time. Have a wonderful day.

Warmly,
Jeana G. Gonzales

On Apr 15, 2021, at 7:45 AM, Debbie Ethell <debbieethell@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Ms. Gonzales,

I appreciate your response. Pending litigation would only affect current board members (such as Ms. Spiers) involved in the matter but certainly not unseated board members who won't even be seated until such litigation and/or investigations has concluded. I'm sure that as a school board member you will be asked harder questions than this so I would like to offer you another opportunity to address them again. I should also let you know that Ms. Hays saw no such concerns addressing the questions (nor did four other candidates thus far) and each have provided me with their answers.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter.

Best,
Debbie

← **Jeana Gonzales**

Apr 15, 2021, 1:21 PM (4 days ago)

to me ▾

Dear Ms Ethell,

I look forward to being in a position on the Board where I can hear all sides, and follow the process. It would be irresponsible for me, or any other candidate, to comment where there's incomplete information or findings available.

Kind regards,
Jeana G. Gonzales

Interview with Debbie Hays at Chapin Park on Saturday, April 17, 2021 at 10:25am

DE: Can you tell me what it was that made you want to run for school board?

DH: It was because of what I've been reading in the newspaper in terms of the ethics investigations against the current board.

DE: Have you ever run for any political position before?

DH: No I haven't. But I'm a mom of three young kids and work full-time in a position I've excelled at. I want to create a place, a safe place, for my kids to go school as they grow up and this seemed like a good way in. And obviously, there are a lot of issues over there that need some attention.

DE: Have you read any of the other articles in the newspaper concerning the equestrian coach?

DH: Yes I have. I've read them all I think.

DE: What is your impression of what's going on.

DH: Well at first I thought this is just a group of sue-happy people ...

DE: There is no lawsuit.

DH: What?

DE: No one is suing the school or there isn't any lawsuit that has been filed yet.

DH: You're kidding me. I did not know that.

DE: All the families want is for a volunteer coach to stop hurting their kids and that is all they've ever asked for. Does that make you think differently about what is going on?

DH: Yes it does because if all they want is change then why is a volunteer still coaching?

DE: That is the \$64,000 question. We have no idea. But all anyone has ever wanted is for her to be removed so she cannot continue to hurt other students.

DH: I didn't know that but the ethics investigations are why I feel it is time to get involved. I just don't understand how a school board can be part of so many on-going investigations.

DE: Would you make a commitment to learning proper District 62 policies and procedures?

DH: Absolutely. That's one of the reasons we are in this mess because no one seems to know what they are doing. We have been watching the school board meetings to get an idea of how they are supposed to be run and they are so casual, so unprofessional, like anything goes. It makes me wonder if anyone knows the policies.

DE: It makes me wonder too. Do you know what the hierarchy of the school board?

DH: I know they are supposed to be in charge of the superintendent and officials at the district, not the other way around. The way they run meetings it seems Mr. Didway is in charge of everything and the school board just goes along with anything he says. It's not supposed to be that way.

DE: How comfortable do you feel standing up to fellow school board members even if they are your friends?

DH: Very comfortable. Our mission is to follow policy, to ensure others are doing what they are supposed to do, to listen to parents and students with complaint and try our best to find a resolution if we can. It is our duty to stand up for the students in our district because if we don't who will.

DE: My thoughts exactly!

DEBBIE HAYS ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS:

Debbie Hays

to me ▾

Apr 19, 2021, 10:41 PM (8 hours ago)



Debbie, it was nice to meet you and I wanted to offer my sincere apologies about how late this has gotten to you. I got caught up with emergencies this weekend with work and I feel horrible that I didn't get this to you sooner.

#1 I do understand that it's hard to remember each and every policy as the list can be long, but in a case like this, I would have immediately stopped the meeting and researched what needed to be done and what was the next steps before proceeding. As a board member, it is your duty to know and understand the policies and procedures as they are written and if you are unsure, then you need to take the time to understand what you are doing or about to do before proceeding.

#2 I would fully investigate any and all reports provided to the board in regards to bullying of any type, but especially from a coach to a student. We, as adults have an obligation to the younger generation to hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We are there to encourage success, nurture young minds, and build their foundation. If it was discovered that reports were falsified, I would immediately suspend the person who falsified the reports to the board and request an investigation into why and how those were published. I would also request an investigation as to why a coach, regardless of tenure, that was in violation of several statutes, would remain in their position.

#3 I have no issues standing up for my beliefs when it comes to other board members if my views do not align with theirs. No two people think alike and being able to voice your opinions for not only yourself, but for members of this community that feel like they have been unheard is something that should be admired and not looked on negatively. If you not like or agree with something, then it is your right to stand up and change them.

#4 – I would be very comfortable in making sure that policies and procedures are followed to the letter.

Currently in my career, I have to ensure that contracts that were negotiated between myself, my company and my suppliers were always followed and that the procedures that are put in place are carried out. In my profession, we are held to annual audits of policies and procedures so this is not new to me.

#5 – In life, whether it be work or volunteering, I have always made sure I know what I am getting into before I commit to something. When I decided to run for the school board, I had already taken the time to start looking into what my role and responsibilities would be if I did win the seat. I wanted to make sure that I knew the role I was about to take on was one that I could do. I will not commit to something if I know that I cannot fully invest my time and effort into that task.

