

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
KINGSWOOD ARTS CENTER
MAY 24, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

The Governor Wentworth Regional School Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Krista Abear, Timothy Eldridge, Wendi Fenderson, Stefanie King, Dr. James Manning, James Pittman, Charlene Seibel, Dana Streeter, John Widmer

Middleton Representative: Kelly Tivnan

Also present: Superintendent Kathleen Cuddy-Egbert, Assistant Superintendent Heather Cummings, WCTV and community members.

OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

School District Clerk Michelle Capone administered the Oath of Office to the newly elected and reelected school board members (Stefanie King, John Widmer and Timothy Eldridge).

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Widmer said he would like to have a brief discussion on school board reorganization.

MASK WEARING OUTDOORS

Mr. Widmer said he called the meeting tonight because the CDC guidelines have changed and he did not want to wait until the regularly scheduled June meeting to discuss the changes. He also said NHIAA has dropped mask requirements for outdoor events so when Kingswood teams travel to an opponent our athletes are wearing masks outdoors and the home teams regulations vary from school to school. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert gave an overview of how CDC has relaxed guidelines for vaccinated adults but they continue to recommend mask wearing in schools. Revised schools recommendations will most likely be published at the end of June. She said the American Association of Pediatrics dropped their recommendation that children wear masks outdoors because the outdoor air circulation disperses the droplets and ultraviolet rays from sunlight destroys the virus. This reduces the likelihood of transmission outdoors but not all outdoor environments are equal. Consideration must also be given to the level of community transmission. Our local experts have expressed comfort with relaxing the mask mandates outdoors. The school board discussed mask wearing outdoors.

Motion: To relax the mask mandate outdoors making it optional at outdoor events and recess. If our students/staff, travel to an outdoor location that requires mask on their property we will honor that requirement.

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: Motion carried 9-0-0 on a roll call vote

Motion: For Kingswood athletic teams to adhere to policies of the opponent regarding mask wearing when travelling to outside venues.

Moved: Ms. Fenderson – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: Motion carried 9-0-0 on a roll call vote

SCHOOL BOARD REORGANIZATION

Mr. Widmer reminded members that they will reorganize at the June meeting. He said if you would like to nominate someone for Chair/Vice Chair and feel comfortable reaching out to them please do

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so to make sure they are willing to take on the position. He asked that they think about what committees they would like to serve on.

PUBLIC INPUT

- Teshia O'Keefe, Wolfeboro, applauded Juanita Hill for speaking against mask mandates at the last school board meeting. Ms. O'Keefe feels our society has mistreated children over the last year and she feels masking healthy children is arguably criminal in a world where most everyone has the option to be vaccinated. She would like to see masks optional inside and outside.
- Sarah Viands, Wolfeboro, questioned the necessity of the daily COVID assessments. Could it be changed to report only if you have symptoms?
- Jessica Williams, Wolfeboro, appreciates that the Board is taking steps in the right direction and said she feels masks should be optional inside as well. She would like masks defined.
- Paul Derosier, Wolfeboro, said we need to look at what point the body starts to habituate through the symptoms. Also, what side effects may be linked to children wearing masks?
- Isaac Farley, Effingham, thanked the board for the decision tonight but said he would like to see masks optional for indoors as well.
- Nicole Comeau, Wolfeboro, thanked the board for making outdoor masks optional. She said inside should be optional as well.
- Wendy Richardson, Conway, optional mask wearing outdoors is a step in the right direction but the number one priority should be taking masks off the children.
- Denise from Massachusetts asked what the district's liability is for children who are mentally and emotionally sick.
- Brodie Deshaies, Wolfeboro, thanked the board for this fiscal restraint in the budget. There were no property tax increases over the past fiscal year. He talked about the district's geographical diversity and how difficult that can be and he said the school board has tried its best to listen to everyone and being approachable. He said we are moving into a new direction focusing less on COVID response and more on COVID reopening. As more people become vaccinated we will see more communities reach herd community which may allow relaxation of masks mandates. He said civil debate and discussion is good. This is a community issue to solve.
- Paul Derosier, Wolfeboro, asked now that the kids have gone back in full are they getting masks breaks and getting outside; even at middle and high school level.
- Robert McGuinness, Wolfeboro, asked now that masks are optional outside will his daughter get to mingle at outdoor recesses with her friends that are in a different class.
- Susan Hertle, Madison and Brookfield home owner, said masks are not effective and do more harm than good. She would like the mask mandate lifted.
- Rhoni Harding, Wolfeboro, added a different perspective as a retired teacher, former school board member and current volunteer at a private school. She said kids need to socialize, be near each other, be in groups, and learn how to add to a discussion without the muffle of masks. She said there is no science evidence that kids need masks. She also thinks the daily assessments should stop.

Mr. Widmer said he appreciates all the comments. He said the board is listening and has heard arguments on both sides.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Motion: At 7:59 pm a motion was made to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II to discuss legal and personnel matters.

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Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

The Board left the stage and entered a classroom. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert presented two nominations and a legal matter was discussed.

Motion: To accept Superintendents nomination of Christopher Nelson as a Technical Education Teacher at Kingwood Regional High School for the 2021-2022 school year. Track 1/Step 2 \$42,552

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To accept Superintendents nomination of Sarah Townsend as Library Media Specialist at Carpenter School for the 2021-2022 school year. Track 4/Step 5 \$55,318

Moved: Ms. Seibel – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

A legal matter was discussed.

Motion: At 8:25 pm a motion was made to end non-public session.

Moved: Ms. Seibel – **Seconded:** Mr. Pittman

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

The School Board went back to the stage and community members were still in attendance. There was no further business.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 8:26 pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board 06.07.21