

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
KINGSWOOD ARTS CENTER
JANUARY 11, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Members Present: Krista Abear, Julianne Cardinal, Timothy Eldridge, Wendi Fenderson (remote attendee), Dr. James Manning, James Pittman, Charlene Seibel (remote attendee), Dana Streeter, John Widmer

Middleton Representative: Kelly Tivnan

Also present: Superintendent Kathleen Cuddy-Egbert, Assistant Superintendent Heather Cummings, Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes, WCTV and community members

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

Add two agenda items: Snow Removal and Food Distribution

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the minutes of the December 7, 2020, School Board meeting as presented.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: Motion passed 8-1 on a roll call vote (Ms. Cardinal abstained)

Motion: To approve the accounts payable (\$1,914,086.00) and payroll (\$2,284,854.25) manifests totaling \$4,199,040.00

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote

V. PUBLIC INPUT

- Mark DeNitto, Wolfeboro, spoke in favor of having winter sports.
- Paul Desrochers, Wolfeboro, spoke in favor of having kids in school full time learning with sports. He said many students are struggling with the new way of learning.
- Cory Hunter, Wolfeboro, thanked the board, administration and staff for all they have done. He spoke in favor of full in person learning and winter sports. He talked about two school districts he feel is similar to ours who have been full in person learning since September. He would like to see students back in school in February with sports resuming immediately.
- Robert Marston, Tuftonboro, thanked the Board for their hard work during difficult times. He said it is important to be transparent and use analytics and data when making decisions. He would like to hear the parent survey results, a report from the consultant, and what is being used to make decisions on students learning remotely/hybrid/in person.
- Roger Decato, Wolfeboro, spoke in favor of kids being in school and in sports.
- Jessica Williams, asked what the State's definition is of an adequate education and how it is being measured right now.
- Bobbi Boudman, Wolfeboro, submitted input via email. She would like to see the substitute teacher pay raised, outdoor sports approved with indoor sports modified and then approved. She would like to see the second semester start delayed by one month so teachers can be vaccinated and start in March with full-time learning with masks and other COVID safety guidelines in place.
- Erica Bickford Cray, submitted input via email supporting the return to the hybrid school model on January 19.

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VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Budget Adoption Hearing 2022

Mr. Widmer gave an overview of the proposed 2022 budget. District enrollment is down which impacts the District's revenue because we receive less in adequacy money, also known as grant money, from the State of NH. The budget as a whole has an increase of 4.16%. No new positions are being brought forward to try and keep the budget down. Mr. Widmer said in the employer portion of the general fund budget the area with the most significant increase is the NH Retirement System. Employer contribution rates are set every two years and are based on a biennial actuarial valuation. The increase in this area is 25.54%. The employee expenses portion is the second largest increase. Mr. Widmer said the District will again present the Turf Field Capital Reserve and Building and Maintenance warrant articles. The building and Maintenance warrant article has been decreased from \$200,000 to \$150,000 and the turf field is \$60,000. Mr. Widmer said each year the school district returns the entire fund balance back to the towns. This past year, with school going remote in March, the District had a large fund balance which helped reduce taxes. This year he expects the amount to be smaller because expenses have not been decreased by the pandemic, instead they have increased.

Preparation for Deliberative Session

Motion: To adopt the 2021-2022 Budget as presented.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To adopt the 2021-2022 School District Warrant.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

At Deliberative Session Mr. Widmer will read the State of the School address, Ms. Cardinal will present Article II, Mr. Pittman Article III and Mr. Widmer Article IV.

School Calendar 2021-2022

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert presented a school calendar with an after Labor Day begin date and a June 20 end date. If the School Board would like to incorporate the first cancellation as a no school day versus a remote day the last day will change to June 21.

Motion: To change the school calendar presented to make September 1 and 2 school days which would make June 16 the last day and possibly June 17 if we include a traditional no school snow day.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** None

The motion did not move forward for lack of a second.

There was discussion on why the District starts after Labor Day as well as making the first cancellation a no school day instead of a remote learning day. It was favored so a no school day was incorporated into the draft calendar.

Motion: To adopt the 2021-2022 school calendar as presented, with the first cancellation being a no school day instead of a remote learning day.

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: Motion passed on a roll call vote 7-2 (Mr. Eldridge and Dr. Manning voted against the motion.)

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Use of school Exemption for Municipalities

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the Town of Effingham and Town of Wolfeboro have asked permission to use the school district facilities for Town Elections/Deliberative Sessions since their facilities are less than optimal with COVID restrictions. Mr. Widmer said the Town of Tuftonboro has also inquired. The Board discussed the COVID guidelines and what to do if voting falls on an in-person school day.

Motion: To allow School District municipalities to use school facilities for Town Elections/Deliberative Sessions with the understanding that they adhere to safety protocols and take precautions to keep everyone safe practicing social distancing and sanitation measures. The School Board authorized the Superintendent to work out the details if elections fall on a school day.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Changes to School Calendar 2020-2021

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert asked for approval to incorporate a no school snow day instead of a remote learning day into the current calendar to be used if we have another cancellation. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said this idea has been endorsed by the Governor and many parents have expressed interest as well.

Motion: To revise the current school calendar, 2020-2021, to incorporate a no school day instead of a remote learning day if we have to cancel school due to weather. If a no school day is used it will lengthen the school year by one day.

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: Motion passed on a roll call vote 5-4 (Ms. Cardinal, Mr. Eldridge, Ms. Fenderson and Mr. Streeter voted against the motion.)

Substitute Teacher Pay

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the District is having a very difficult time finding substitute teachers. The rate has been \$75 per day for many years. She said our para educator salary should be reviewed as well so we can continue to attract people in both classifications. It was recommended that the finance committee review the two positions and make a recommendation to the full board.

COVID-19 Update

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said there have been some changes in the CDC guidelines therefore changing our reopening plan. The reference to three foot social distancing has been taken out so six foot is the standard. She also feels it is safe to remove the 2-5 day closing while we are working with DHHS, local experts and conducting our own contact tracing. CDC and DHHS are recommending a 10-day quarantine which should help with staffing. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert reviewed data on community transmission and school impact.

- School Athletics. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert thanked Aaron House for all his hard work in keeping our athletes safe. She said the plans he has developed to promote safety have been in line with district, state and CDC guidelines. Mr. House presented a proposal for an intramural program for students in grades 7-12 as an alternative/modification to the regular winter sports season. He would like to begin the intramural program immediately at the high school with the opportunity to compete at the NHIAA end of season tournament. To be able to compete he presented in the proposal the option to return to the Lakes Region schedule on February 15.

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Motion: To return to full interscholastic winter sports immediately with a local schedule and following District protocol. Girls ice hockey and Nordic ski may have to travel outside of the local schedule to be able to compete.

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

Discussion: There was discussion on planned and unplanned remote learning. If the District had to shift to an unplanned remote learning sports would cease as well. If the District is in a planned remote activities would continue. Also lengthy discussion on protocols and practice schedule to prepare students for competition. Ms. Abear talked about the different perspectives between the Board and community members and why she is now feeling more positive about sports. She said some people say the Board is afraid but Ms. Abear said they are concerned about the kids. Another phrase used was that the Board was punishing the kids and Ms. Abear said that is the last thing the Board would do. She said the Board wants to protect the students education and their lives. Some community members have said the Board is not seeing or hearing what some parents or the public was saying. Ms. Abear said she does not think that's true at all. She thinks they are seeing and hearing very much.

Vote: Motion passed on a roll call vote 7-2 (Ms. Fenderson and Ms. Seibel voted against the motion.)

- **School Schedule**

Mr. Widmer said the District is currently remote through the Martin Luther King holiday. He recommends returning to the hybrid model on January 19 indefinitely because we are unable to have 6' social distancing. Each month the status can be reviewed and revised if necessary.

Motion: To return to the hybrid learning model following the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday (Tuesday, January 19).

Moved: Mr. Pittman – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

Future Board Meetings

Mr. Widmer thought the Board may need to meet more often than once per month but it is not necessary right now. He said the Board will stay with the monthly schedule but if any board member feels the need for a special meeting they just need to contact him or the Superintendent.

Snow Removal

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert thanked the custodial staff for all their hard work clearing snow during the December nor'easter. She also thanked the bus drivers because they had a lot of snow to clear off and around the buses.

Food Distribution

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said on January 15 the NH Food Bank will bring truckloads of food to distribute to families and individuals in Carroll County. This is a drive through event at St. Joseph's Church in Center Ossipee. All items will be distributed to individuals in their vehicles.

NH School Boards Association

Mr. Widmer said he has a NHIAA meeting tomorrow as well as a NHSBA meeting. NHSBA will discuss the annual meeting on January 23. He said the meeting and voting on the resolutions will be done electronically.

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VII. CHAIRMANS REPORT

Mr. Widmer said expressions of sympathy were sent to Deb Bunting on the passing of her father. He also read an appreciation card from Lloyd Wood.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports

IX. CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Advanced Planning: Mr. Widmer read upcoming events from the bottom of the agenda.

Public Input: Ms. Seibel asked what responsibility the Board has if someone attends a Board meeting who has been in close contact with a positive COVID person. Mr. Widmer said the Board is relying on people's honesty. Robert Marston apologized to Ms. Abear if his difference of opinions came across negatively. He said everyone is doing the best they can. He appreciates the metrics being posted and asked if when the spikes come down and we are in a lower category will we be able to reopen schools full time. He asked the Board if 6' social distancing guidelines are an absolute or a guideline. Cory Hunter shared his basketball coaching experience over the last couple of months saying it works smoothly when protocols are followed. He said he is also hopeful that the Board will reconsider use of facilities for youth sports. Jessica Williams spoke about the protocols at some of the hockey arenas in the State for players and fans. She told the Board that slander is a crime and then asked Ms. Cuddy-Egbert if it is her responsibility as Superintendent to set and approve curriculum. Ms. Williams said she wants to make a complaint that curriculum is being removed. She also had questions about the standards. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert asked Ms. Williams to call her office and make an appointment so they can talk. Roger Decato said he understands there will not be a date this evening for returning to school full time but asked if perhaps the Board could have ideas or a couple of dates for the next Board meeting.

Closing Comments by Board Members: Ms. Seibel expressed disappointment with the vaccine rollout because she thinks teachers should be considered essential works. Mr. Streeter thanked those people who chose to attend the meeting in person and to those for streaming online. He said the Board is trying to provide the best opportunity for children by making the best decisions with the information being provided. Mr. Eldridge thanked his fellow Board members for reconsidering participation in sports. He also asked how full in learning at Middleton Elementary School is going. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the staff is doing a great job. It is all hands on deck but they are making it work. Mr. Eldridge asked if a conversation could occur with Conway to see if we may be able to model some aspects of what they are doing for full in learning. Dr. Manning thanked Ms. Abear for her insight about the Board's perspective versus that of the community. Dr. Manning also said he dislikes the term "guideline" and prefers to use best practices. Mr. Widmer thanked everyone for attending, listening to the process, and for their input.

X. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Motion: At 9:47 pm a motion was made to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II to discuss a personnel/student/legal matter.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Superintendent Cuddy-Egbert discussed employee leave during the pandemic. The Board gave the Superintendent the authority to determine sick bank use.

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert shared retirement and resignation letters.

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Motion: To accept the with sincere appreciation for their service to the District the retirement notice from Michelina Madden and Kim Reed effective at the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To accept the resignation letter, with appreciation, from James Wares and release him from his teaching contract effective January 6, 2021.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To accept the resignation letter, with appreciation, from Dianna Serrano and release her from her teaching contract effective January 3, 2021.

Moved: Mr. Eldridge – **Seconded:** Dr. Manning

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To accept the resignation letter, with appreciation, from Georgia Brunelle and release her from her school nurse position effective January 4, 2021.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

The Board discussed the Martin Luther King holiday and SAU personnel.

Motion: To make the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday a standard holiday for SAU staff who work 52 weeks on an “x” contract.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To adjust the Superintendent’s contract for the 2021-2022 school year.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: 10:46 pm a motion was made to end non-public session.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 10:46 pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Mr. Eldridge

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board 02.08.21