

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
REMOTE MEETING DUE TO COVID-19 EXPOSURE
DECEMBER 7, 2020**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Governor Wentworth Regional School Board meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

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

Excused: Julianne Cardinal

Middleton Representative: Kelly Tivnan

Also Present: Superintendent Kathleen Cuddy-Egbert, Assistant Superintendent Heather Cummings, Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes and Timothy Goodwin from WCTV.

The Board is authorized to meet electronically in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order and Board exposure and quarantine due to COVID-19. The body utilized Google Meet and all members of the Board had the ability to communicate during this meeting using this platform. The meeting was also livestreamed for community members and they are able to utilize the two public participation segments of the meeting by providing email correspondence to sau49@sau49.org or jwidmer@sau49.org within 48 hours of the meeting. Correspondence will be included with meeting minutes as an addendum. All votes taken by roll call vote.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

To make VI. F. COVID-19 Update an action item. Also under VIII. A. Academic Affairs add Policy JCA for approval.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Motion: To accept the November 9, 2020, Academic Affairs Committee meeting notes as presented.

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

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote of the Academic Affairs Committee.

Motion: To accept the November 9, 2020, School Board meeting minutes as presented.

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

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

Motion: To accept the November 17, 2020, Finance Committee meeting notes as presented.

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

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote of the Finance Committee.

Motion: To accept the November 18, 2020, Finance Committee meeting notes as presented.

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

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote of the Finance Committee.

Motion: To accept the November 19, 2020, Finance Committee meeting notes as presented.

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

Vote: Motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote of the Finance Committee.

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
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Motion: To approve the accounts payable (1,370,889.33) and payroll (2,234,154.67) manifests totaling \$3,605,044.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Widmer announced that the Board will accept emails up to 24 hours after the meeting (changed later in the meeting to 48 hours). He said texting during the meeting is too difficult. Emails can be sent to SAU 49 or to Mr. Widmer's email address.

VI. SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Preliminary Adoption of 2022 Budget

Mr. Widmer gave an overview of the proposed 2022 budget and process. 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 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. Ms. Abear asked if the budget includes an increase to the substitute teacher rate and Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said they are considering an equitable rate. Mr. Widmer said the NH Retirement System employer contribution rates are set every two years and are based on a biennial actuarial valuation. He said it is a very high rate for an unfunded balance representing a 25.54% increase. Ms. Seibel asked what the staff health insurance contribution rate is and teachers pay 7% and in the 4th year it will go to 10%, support staff 10% and the administrators contribute 3%. Mr. Eldridge strongly recommends that the Buildings and Maintenance Warrant Article get raised back to \$200,000.

American Education Week

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert read a letter presented to faculty and staff for American Education week (November 16-20). She said words alone seem inadequate to express gratitude for all the work everyone does and has done during these unprecedented times.

Robotics Education Development Program Grant

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert announced that the State of NH Department of Education Robotics Education Development Program grant was awarded to the high school for \$4650 for the school year 2020-2021. She thanked Jim Sydemore for his efforts.

Motion: To accept the Robotics Education Development Program grant awarded to Kingswood Regional High School in the amount of \$4650.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Superintendent Services – Wakefield School District

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said the District received a request from the Wakefield School Board for the District to consider the possibility of the Wakefield School District obtaining SAU services from the SAU 49 District Office.

Motion: To notify the Wakefield School Board that at this time the SAU 49 staff is providing services for the Governor Wentworth Regional School District and the Middleton School District.

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
REMOTE MEETING DUE TO COVID-19 EXPOSURE
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The School Board feels the SAU Office is working at full capacity and is unable to consider offering services to their District.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

School Calendar 2021-2022

A draft calendar was shared with the School Board. It will now be shared with the union and sending Districts.

Motion: To delay voting on the calendar until the January meeting.

Moved: Dr. Manning – **Seconded:** Ms. Seibel

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

COVID-19 Update

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert reported that she is very pleased to be able to keep schools open thus far (instrumental due to social distancing and a hybrid schedule). Staff absences have been hard but manageable. The trajectory is slow right now but there are worries that the student absence rate will increase. It has been steadily increasing since Thanksgiving. Mr. Widmer suggested that the District continue with hybrid learning until the Christmas break and move to full remote learning for two weeks following Christmas break. Perhaps have a target date for a full in-person return. The Board had an in depth conversation about staff and student absentee rates and the various learning options as well as time frames. From feedback received from parents there is no clear consensus for any one direction.

Motion: To go full remote effective December 14, 2020 through the Martin Luther King holiday.

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

Discussion: Board members provided feedback on the timeline and whether to remain with the hybrid learning model or to go to full remote. Ms. Seibel said the Board needs to revisit winter sports. Mr. Widmer said this will happen after the vote on the learning model.

Vote: Motion failed 5-3. Mr. Eldridge, Mr. Pittman and Ms. Seibel voted in favor of the modified motion.

Motion: To continue with hybrid learning until the Christmas break and after the break go fully remote for two weeks; until after the Martin Luther King holiday.

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

Vote: Motion passed 6-2. Mr. Eldridge and Ms. Fenderson voted against the motion.

Winter Sports

There was discussion on whether to continue with winter sports, cancel the activities or wait to vote at the January meeting. Some activities are easier to mitigate than others. Ms. Cuddy-Egbert said tryouts are scheduled prior to the January board meeting.

Motion: To discontinue winter sports, with regret, immediately for all teams.

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

Vote: Motion passed 7-1. Mr. Eldridge voted against the motion.

NH School Boards Association

Mr. Widmer said seven resolutions will be presented at this year's Delegate Assembly. They voted to hold next year's Delegate Assembly in the fall (last Saturday in September).

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
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VII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Widmer said get well wishes were sent to Lloyd Wood. Effingham Elementary students also sent handwritten/illustrated cards to the Board with how happy they are with the solar project.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs

Ms. Fenderson presented policy EHAB, Data Governance and Security and Policy JCA, Change of School or Assignment for approval.

Motion: To approve Policy EHAB and Policy JCA as presented.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Buildings & Maintenance

Ms. O'Blenes said the solar power went live November 17 and to date have produced 376 megahertz. She and Mr. Eldridge did a recent walk through of the buildings. CPI will be coming up. Mr. Eldridge suggested Ms. O'Blenes talk with the finance committee about the project list because many of the project keep getting moved and he fears they will eventually turn into big projects. Ms. O'Blenes will gather information for the finance committee.

Finance

No additional report

Human Resources

No report

IX. CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Advanced Planning

Upcoming events were read from the bottom of the agenda. The Arts Center is the best space for the January 11 School Board meeting but Crescent Lake will be the alternate site if the Arts Center is not available.

Public Input

Mr. Widmer said public comments should be emailed to SAU 49 or to his email address. The Board extended comments through the end of the day on Wednesday due to the significant power and internet outage from the storm.

Closing Comments by Board Members

No closing comments

X. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Motion: At 8:55 pm a motion was made to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II to discuss a student and personnel matter.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Superintendent Cuddy-Egbert informed the Board of a residency request.

**GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
REMOTE MEETING DUE TO COVID-19 EXPOSURE
DECEMBER 7, 2020**

Motion: To allow student to attend Kingswood Regional Middle School.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Ms. Cuddy-Egbert shared a retirement letter from Torri Richards which was accepted with sincere appreciation for her service to the District.

Motion: At 9:04 pm a motion was made to end non-public session.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 9:05 pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

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

Vote: It was a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,



School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board 01.11.2021