

**Inter-Lakes School Board Regular Meeting
Inter-Lakes Middle/High School Community Auditorium
1 Laker Lane, Meredith, NH
November 10, 2020**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Richard Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. RECORD ROLL

Members Present:

Mr. Richard Hanson, Chair
Mr. Mark Billings, Vice-Chair
Ms. Lisa Merrill, Secretary
Mr. Craig Baker
Mr. Duncan Porter-Zuckerman*
Ms. Nancy Starmer
Ms. Raven Strother, Student Rep.

Members Absent:

Mr. Charles Hanson (*with notice*)

*Remote attendance

Administrators Present:

Ms. Mary Moriarty, Superintendent
Ms. Trish Temperino, Asst. Superintendent
Mr. Michael Bryant, Principal ILES
Mr. Scott Currier, Principal ILM/HS
Ms. Sarah Dumais, Athletic Director
Mr. Jeremy Hillger, Principal SCS

Others Present:

Diane Mega, Video Recorder
Patty Coes, Technology Technician
Public

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Superintendent Moriarty addressed the issue of winter athletics noting the NHIAA will allow skill building in small groups to start November 30; practice to start December 14; first competitions on January 11. At Inter-Lakes the Athletic Director has proposed January 19 as the date of first competitions.

The administration is recommending the School Board consider granting conditional approval to the Nordic season as it is outdoors with no close contact; subject to change if issues arise. The recommendation for the School Board to hold making a decision regarding end of season tournaments until the February School Board meeting was brought forward.

Speaking to the Hockey and Basketball season, which are indoors and require close contact, the Superintendent is recommending creation of a School District Workgroup made up of Student Leaders: Hockey (1), Basketball (2), Student Representative to School Board (1), Student Council President (1); Parents (4); School Board Members (3); Athletic Trainer; Athletic Director, ILM/HS Principal; Superintendent – Total 16 members.

- Principal Currier and Athletic Director Dumais will work with Student Leaders to design a process for the workgroup.
- The workgroup will bring a recommendation to the December 8 School Board meeting for School Board consideration/decision.

The Middle School Football Coach spoke in support of winter athletics commenting that holding the season was the safest way to keep local kids in their home community.

Cancelling the season will prompt parents to seek other athletic opportunities outside the area. He urged the School Board to allow winter season play until such time it was considered unsafe to do so.

Student Owen Carney spoke in support of winter athletics saying sports help kids grow and has mental health benefits. As of October 29, no positive COVID-9 cases have been linked to NHIAA events. Inter-Lakes student athletes have shown their willingness to following safety protocols in order to enjoy the privilege to play.

Liz Littell of Center Harbor questioned the make-up of the COVID Response Team. Based on comments made at the last School Board meeting she said her impression was that students were not allowed on the team as sensitive information was being discussed. She said it was a HIPAA violation for the team to identify anyone who had tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Littell supports the Superintendent's recommendation for the creation of a Workgroup.

Superintendent Moriarty said the written plan approved by the School Board included one parent and one student on the COVID-19 Response Team. No names or other health information is ever disclosed during their meetings. The so-called sensitive information relates to school staffing, she explained. The intent is to expand the membership of the team to include a parent representative from all three schools. Three students have also been invited to join. The district is also working to develop its own online dashboard that will detail the number of positive cases and of the number of people in quarantine.

Liz Littell asked if the student representatives were hand-picked. Mrs. Moriarty said School Board Student Representative Raven Strother has been asked to serve as have two other students who are interested in pursuing a career in the health care field.

Sara Ancil, Meredith commented that she does not believe remote learning is of the same quality as in-person. A lot of money has been spent to open the schools and opening was delayed because of fears Motorcycle Week would spread the virus, but that did not happen. She urged the Board to allow the winter sports season to go on, touting the benefits to students' physical and mental well-being. For some students the ability to play sports may be key to them having the desire to stay in school.

Stacey Bivolcic, Meredith said sports are not only essential for the kids who play but for those who come to see the games and to support the teams. She said athletics are an important part of social learning noting that not all students go on to college.

Steve Merrill, Meredith, thanked the audience for keeping their comments respectful. While he recognizes the benefits of high school sports, he said local students will not become professional athletes but will need an education. Athletic competitions increase the risk of exposing teachers to the virus and keeping the schools in remote versus in-person learning. He thanked the School Board and the COVID-19 Response Team for weighing all these factors as they make their decision.

Tara Rowland said remote learning was especially difficult for her children who have Individualized Education Plans. While she supports sports, she urged the Board to consider the impact on in-person learning and to do everything they can to keep students in the classroom.

V. MINUTES

A. Special School Board Meeting – September 14, 2020

Mr. Baker moved, seconded by Mr. Billings, to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 Special School Board Meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. CURRENT BILLS PAYABLE

A. General Operating Expenses

Mr. Billings moved, seconded by Ms. Merrill, to approve the payment of bills, manifests #3011. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. District/School COVID-19 Update

The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent detailed that District spending associated with COVID-19 has totaled \$697,562 that will be partially offset by \$196,400 in funding from the N.H. Department of Education provided by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities (CARES) Act and the Elementary and the Supplemental Public School Response Fund (SPSRF). \$268,182 will come from the District's General Fund.

Growing enrollment in First Grade at Inter-Lakes Elementary School which previously prompted discussion about the need for an additional teacher will be solved by the return of an educator now on leave, Mrs. Moriarty told the board. Home schooling enrollment is down one to 39.

Mr. Billings asked if the administration knows how many parents of Kindergarten age students decided not to enroll their children this year. The Superintendent did not have an exact number but said she predicts a large Grade 1 enrollment next year, noting Kindergarten is not mandated. Enrollment District-Wide is now 933.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE None

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. School Calendar/Physically In-Person Tier Around Thanksgiving and December Break

Mrs. Moriarty shared that from September 14 – November 10 the District has experienced six positive COVID-19 cases. In PK – Grade 6 there have been 35 days Full Physically In-Person; and 5 days full Remote, In Grades 7-12 there have been 33 days Full Physically In-Person; and 7 days Full Remote. NH has been fortunate to have experienced mild fall weather allowing for outside classes. As students move indoors, it can become a transmission event.

The Superintendent stated that there are options to be considered moving forward. The first option would be to maintain Full Physically In-Person; recognizing most likely unpredictable closures due to COVID-19 and related issues.

Option 2 would be to adjust to a Partial Remote Tier over nine days from December 1-11; return to Full Physically In-Person Tier over eight days from December 14-23 – with possible closures to address COVID-19 cases. December 24-January 3, would be December Break, with the 10 days from January 4-January 15 adjusting

to Partial Remote Tier and January 19 marking the return to Full Physically In-Person Tier, with possible closures to address COVID-19 cases.

Recently there were 19 absences at Inter-Lakes Elementary School and 14 were staff members. Some were the result of daycare issues if a child had close contact with someone who tested positive and it is just getting more complicated to ensure proper staffing.

Ms. Starmer said she was sensitive to the effect school closing has on families and on staff, the lack of predictability adds to the strain.

Superintendent Moriarty agreed that “ping-ponging” back and forth is hard on families. The reactive approach has stressors and the second option provides a chance to plan. The District should be proud of the In-Person days it has accomplished but they are hard fought. It is hard to know what the right decision is, which is why two options have been presented to the School Board.

Mr. Billings said the District’s schools are the safest place for students to be as a result of the extensive safety protocols that have been put in place including health screenings and social distancing. Virtual education will never match In-Person Learning, he said. Staff flexibility is key to the continuation of In-Person Learning.

Ms. Merrill said she is aware that some colleges are taking an extended break over the holidays and inquired whether other school districts in the region are following suit. The Superintendent said Moultonborough is extending its break by five days. Ms. Merrill said consideration should be given to a similar extension at Inter-Lakes as it would provide added time for symptoms to develop and be recognized, preventing the need to close the schools.

Ms. Strother said remote is a hard way to learn. There has been a lot of discussion in class about preparing for an extended period of remote learning. More structure is needed and it is difficult to be in front of a computer screen for the entire school day.

Superintendent Moriarty said she didn’t believe the District had five days of seat time to give up to extend the December break, commenting that perhaps it was best to stay the course and take it from there.

Chairman Hanson said he favors keeping kids in school as much as possible in the safest manner. The District has invested considerable resources to make the schools as safe as possible. He noted that there has not been a single case of COVID-19 linked to in-school transmission. The District’s goal should be to maintain as much normalcy as it can.

Ms. Merrill said there are no easy answers. The Board understands how important In-Person Learning is and that continuing that model is difficult

Ms. Starmer moved, seconded by Mr. Billings, to continue Full Physically In-Person Tier, subject to necessary closures due to COVID-19 and related issues. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Winter Athletics

Mr. Billings moved, seconded by Ms. Merrill to give conditional approval, subject to change if issues arise, for the Nordic season, with no commitment to end of season tournament. The motion passed unanimously.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Wood Pellet Fuel Bid

Mr. Billings moved, seconded by Mr. Baker, to approve the wood pellet fuel bid from Lyme Green Heat, Inc. of Lyme, NH for \$229/ton fixed price; expiring June 30, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Donations

- \$5,000 from Dr. Craig Gruskowski in the name of Colonel Edward J. Gruskowski, Ron Jutras, and Coach Levine; \$2,500 to benefit Middle School Football Team and \$2,500 to a High School Team.
- Nautilus Equipment, valued at \$10,000 from John and Jack Hyslip to benefit the Inter-Lakes Middle/High School Physical Education and Athletic Programs.
- \$1,350 from Hannaford Helps Program to Sandwich Central School; funds will support the purchase of equipment for winter activities program.
- \$1,551 from Hannaford Helps Program to Inter-Lakes Middle/High School.
- \$987 from Hannaford Helps Program to Inter-Lakes Middle/High School

Ms. Merrill moved, seconded by Ms. Starmer, to accept the donations as presented, with gratitude. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. POLICY

No action required.

XII. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

A. Members of the Board None

B. Members of the Administration None

XIII. PUBLIC INPUT

Lindsay Weiner, Meredith expressed concern with the “racial slur” made by a member of the public referring to COVID-19 as the “China Virus”; this type of language should be condemned.

Joe Spicuzza, Meredith asked who would make the decision regarding the hockey season as the team is a joint venture with the Laconia and Winnisquam School Districts. The administration said it would be a shared decision.

Neil Arruda, Meredith asked whether there was any consideration given to allowing students to vote on the length of the sports season.

Corrine Jutton, Meredith said not making an immediate decision regarding all winter sports leaves students in limbo. Kids throughout the state are competing in AAU competitions without incident so they can continue to practice their skills. She urged the board to make an immediate decision.

Becky Fuller, Center Harbor stated that full remote learning for her family was overwhelming due to work schedules; prolonged virtual learning over the holidays would only add to the stress.

Julie Hayward, Meredith, asked how the money donated to the Inter-Lakes Middle/High School football team would be used as the team currently receives no financial support from the District. The Superintendent responded that a conversation with Athletic Director Dumais will help determine how the donation will be allocated.

Heather Gray, Meredith asked how mask wearing was being enforced in the schools commenting that while waiting in her vehicle in the pickup line she has observed students without masks standing less than six feet apart.

Kristen Brown, Meredith, urged the School Board not to cancel the winter sports season preemptively based on what ifs and to base any such decision on facts.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Tuesday, December 8, 2020 @ Inter-Lakes Community Auditorium

- Inter-Lakes Regular School Board Meeting – **6:00 p.m.**

B. Tuesday, December 17, 2020 – Remote/LiveStream

SAU #2 Board Meeting – Remote Access <https://meet.google.com/uqc-kqfz-btq>

- Budget Public Hearing – **6:00 p.m.**

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Merrill moved, seconded by Mr. Billings, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.
The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted.

Bea Lewis Wheeler
School District Clerk