

RSU #63 Board Meeting
Date: March 22, 2021
Location: Holbrook Middle School
Minutes

RSU 63 Board Member(s) Present:

Town of Holden: John Hutchins, Heather Charity, Cherie Faulkner, and Holly Whitmore

Town of Clifton: Linda Graban

Town of Eddington: Robin James and Steve Carr (Remote)

RSU 63 Board Member Absent:

Town of Eddington: Charles Baker, Jr.

Board Chair, John Hutchins called the meeting to order at 6:33pm

A flag salute was conducted and a moment of silence was observed.

John Hutchins called for a motion to approve the February 22, 2021 Board Meeting minutes.

Motion by Heather Charity with a second by Robin James to approve the minutes for the February 22, 2021 Board Meetings.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

Recognition and/or Awards of Students, Staff, and Other: Superintendent Smith recognized Grade 5 students Leah Bartlett, Cambria Duperry, and Ceclia Higgins for their nomination to the National Youth Leadership Forum (NYLF), Pathways to STEM. These students were nominated by teachers for their leadership and academic achievements. Superintendent Smith recognized the teachers and staff members at Holbrook Middle School for handing out 411 kudo's cards to students for trimester two. Students were displaying one or more of the RSU 63 Core values.

Acceptance of Gifts and Donations: The Bangor Regional Y provided a three-month membership to all RSU 63 staff. An anonymous parent provided lunch to the Holbrook staff on Friday, March 19, 2021 during a Professional Development Day. Rachel Downs, her family, and community members provided a pound cake kit to all RSU 63 staff. John Lucian and family of Perry, ME and Connecticut gave cash and food donation for CHEFS.

Presentation: Superintendent Smith shared a May through August calendar handout. The plan is for students to attend five days per week beginning May 3, 2021. This allows time for staff to be vaccinated before cross grade level teaching begins. Administrators are currently working on scheduling. The last student day of the 2020-2021 school year will be Thursday, June 10, 2021. The last teacher day will be Friday, June 11, 2021. The next community conversation topic will be "Concerns and hopes for returning to in-person learning five days per week". Masks and physical distancing rules will still apply. Lunch will continue to be in the classroom, Pre-K will continue with two days per week, live PE instruction will be twice per week, and NWEA testing will begin the week of May 17th. The state will reimburse the license fee for the Grades 3-8 NWEA testing, as this is now the State of Maine assessment.

Superintendent Smith advised there are many after-school activities planned to begin in May and bus transportation will be available. The Penobscot Valley Middle School League (PVML) Baseball and Softball coaching positions were posted. A coach for baseball is on the agenda for appointment and softball had no coaching interest for PVML, however intramural play will be offered. Supt. Smith advised the district is working on spectator guidelines with the PVML and will coordinate with the other activities on campus to comply with COVID school guidelines. Jamie Pangburn asked if students were able to participate in more than one after-school activity. Ashley Allen confirmed the activities were staggered to ensure students could participate multiple activities.

Questions and Comments from the Board: John Hutchins asked if moving to five days per week allowed planning time for teachers, as that was a concern at the beginning of the school year. Superintendent Smith advised that has been a concern of many and Administrators are working hard on schedules to allow planning time for teachers.

Mr. Hutchins asked for an update on staff vaccination. Superintendent Smith advised the COVID vaccine clinic with Penobscot Community Health Clinic was cancelled as they did not receive their vaccine shipment. Most staff have been able to schedule appointments elsewhere.

Questions and Comments from the Public: Amy Hart, Holden resident shared her support for the return to in person instruction five days per week. She has a sixth-grade student, who she transferred to Orono (due to the hybrid schedule and mental wellness) where she is a teacher, an eighth-grade student who attends Holbrook, and a high school student who attends John Bapst. She advised Orono has been in person since August with no outbreaks and no staff absences due to COVID. They offer live stream instruction for remote students and those students are often paired with an in-person student. Their students do not have mask break and the students are fine. If they need a break, they ask. They have in person PE class and also use the gym for lunch time. Ms. Hart advised she does not have an ed tech in her classroom of approximately 20 students. She stated the students are resilient and doing great. The NWEA scores attest to how well the students have adjusted. They also offer daily COVID testing for staff who may have been exposed so there is no lost teacher time. She felt RSU 63 could safely return to in person instruction 5 days per week.

Dates of Next Committee Meetings:

Budget and Finance Committee: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 3:30pm, Holbrook Middle School and Remotely

Policy Committee: Monday, April 12, 2021 at 5:30pm, Holbrook Middle School and Remotely

Community Conversation: Wednesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:30pm, Remote Connectivity Only

Board Meeting: Monday, April 26, 2021 Executive Session at 5:30pm. Public portion resuming at approximately 6:30pm, Holbrook Middle School and Remotely

Budget and Finance: Nothing to add to the Business Manager Report. Nothing to add to the Budget and Finance Committee Report. Superintendent Smith advised the March 16, 2021 Budget and Finance Minutes are in the Board Folders. Superintendent Smith advised the FY22 Budget process is going very well. The budget overall is down and is anticipated to be a decrease for towns. The draft FY22 budget will be brought to the Board in April.

Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Smith advised Kelly Davis notified RSU 63 that she will not be providing child care at the Eddington School next school year. Mrs. Davis has been working on her Ed Tech certification and will be pursuing that career. We will put out a request for proposals to see if we can continue offering a child care service at Eddington.

The Facilities Advisory Committee and John Hutchins received the Holden Generator proposal from Carpenter Associates today. We will be asking to have the propane connection to the generator include the kitchen and heat. This project is part of the current budget. The request for bids will appear in the newspaper with a bid due date of April 9th. Superintendent Smith asked the Facilities Advisory members if April 12th or 14th would be a good day to meet. The members agreed April 12th at 6:30pm would work best for all.

Superintendent Smith advised the UMaine Eagle Eye Team will be attending the April Board meeting for their Holbrook reconfiguration project presentation.

RSU 63 Chair's Report: None.

Acceptance of Reports: Motion by Linda Graban with a second by Cherie Faulkner to approve the written and verbal reports from Budget and Finance, Superintendent, Administrators, and Board Chair.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

Old Business:

Mission and Vision: The Policy Committee has worked hard to revise the RSU 63 Mission and Vision to align with the goals of the District. Some bullets were consolidated, language was added, and the goals were updated to reflect the new direction of the District. Superintendent Smith advised a motion would be needed to approve the revised Mission and Vision.

Motion by Heather Charity with a second by Robin James to approve the revised RSU 63 Mission and Vision.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

New Business:

Policies to Approve: Motion by Heather Charity with a second by Robin James to approve policy ACAA-R – Student Discrimination Complaint Procedures; policy ACAB-R – Employee Discrimination Complaint Procedures; and policy BDA – Organizational Meeting; policy BDE – Committee Structure, Assignment, and Reporting.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

Policies to Rescind: Motion by Holly Whitmore with a second by Cherie Faulkner to rescind policy BEC – Executive Sessions; policy BEC-R – Executive Session Law; policy BEDG – Minutes of Meetings; policy BIE – Board Member Liability Insurance.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

Personnel Actions:

Appointments: Zachery Pratt, Holbrook Baseball Coach

Resignations: Quincy Hanzen, Holbrook COVID Support Substitute and Karen Tate, Bus Driver.

Retirements: Margaret “Kathy” Jellison, Elementary Schools Music Teacher; Cynthia Frey, Grade Two Teacher; Rick Slowikowski, Elementary Schools PE/APE Teacher; and Rita Lovejoy, Holbrook Special Education Teacher.

Reassignments: None.

Elections: None.

Searches: COVID Support Substitute, Substitutes, and Summer School Staff.

Questions and Comments from the Public: Tracy Roberts stated she was disappointed the return to in person instruction five days per week has taken so long and felt the District is moving very slowly with their plans at the expense of the students. Other school districts have been in person five days per week far sooner than RSU 63. She also stated the District does not need to wait until staff are vaccinated for students to return, there is no law or guideline that states this is a requirement. Cherie Faulkner asked if it was a staff preference to wait until they are vaccinated. Superintendent Smith advised the vaccine provides more confidence for the teachers and there are other personnel factors that cannot be publicly discussed that has not allowed the District to move forward faster. Jamie Pangburn asked why the District has a lack of PE class. She stated she is frustrated with backpacks being sent home with items that do not always function properly or promote physical activity to increase the heart rate. She stated she felt the students have not sweat in over a year in PE class. She felt the District has not offered enough activities to engage all students on a daily basis and does not feel all student needs are being met. Amy Hart added students being in a POD all day is hard on them and does not allow for enough movement or activity. She felt her eighth-grade students PE class of juggling socks for ten minutes was not an adequate physical activity. Ms. Hart stated the Orono School District offers before and after school programs to get students engaged and moving. Ms. Pangburn asked why the District is not offering morning intramurals and if any of the COVID funds were used for these programs. Superintendent Smith advised COVID funds were not used for before and after school programs. It was used for materials needed to open our schools safely and technology needs to provide instruction for all students in person and remotely. Ms. Pangburn asked why the District is not taking advantage of the Penobscot Trails free program. Superintendent Smith advised the District is looking into this and there is a group of staff that are working on plans for more student experience programs. Supt. Smith stated she understands PE is important and the District is trying to incorporate more programs and activities. Students do receive 30 minutes of recess daily and three mask breaks. Students are choosing to use those mask breaks to stay masked and participate in physical activity.

Ms. Pangburn asked what the long-term facilities goals were for the maintenance of the fields. She stated she felt the fields were neglected and asked what the maintenance budget was. Cherie Faulkner stated the fields were sprayed by Green Thumb in the past. Heather Charity stated from her experience on the Little League Board, there has been improvement on the fields with lots of grub and tick treatments. She stated she thought the fields were maintained by the Jake Morgan, RSU 63 Facilities Director because they were owned by the District. Superintendent Smith advised there is minimal funds in the budget for field maintenance and confirmed grub and tick treatments were done in previous years. Mr. Morgan stated \$9,000 has recently been spent for infield dirt and line paint for the fields. He confirmed the Little League/Holbrook Rec take care of the Holden and Eddington fields and the District takes care of the Holbrook fields. Ms. Pangburn stated a better maintenance plan needs to be developed for the care of the fields. The community is fully willing to help, but communication between the district and the Holbrook Rec/Little League needs to improve.

Questions and Comments from the Board: Holly Whitmore asked if a Board Orientation/Annual Refresher Committee could be appointed. John Hutchins advised this may best be suited after the June election as there are multiple Board member seats open for the June election. Superintendent Smith asked if Ms. Whitmore was inquiring for a planning meeting or an ad-hoc committee. Ms. Whitmore advised a planning meeting would be best and she volunteered to be on the committee. Robin James and Cherie Faulkner also volunteered to be on the planning committee.

Adjournment: At 7:50pm, motion by Heather Charity with a second by Linda Graban to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote: Steve Carr: Yes; Linda Graban: Yes; Holly Whitmore: Yes; Heather Charity: Yes; Cherie Faulkner: Yes; Robin James: Yes; John Hutchins: Yes

Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed

Respectfully submitted by,



Susan M. Smith

RSU #63 Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Approved: April 26, 2021