

RSU #63 Special Board Meeting  
Date: September 14, 2020  
Location: Holbrook Middle School and Remotely  
Minutes

Remote Dial In Phone Number: 1-414-909-2329 PIN: 426922820

**RSU 63 Board Member(s) Present:**

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

*Town of Clifton:* Linda Graban

*Town of Eddington:* Steve Carr and Robin James

**RSU 63 Board Member Excused Absent:**

*Town of Eddington:* Charles Barker, Jr.

Chair, John Hutchins called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

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

Motion by Steve Carr with a second by Heather Charity to approve the amended minutes for the August 10, 2020 Special Board Meeting.

**Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed**

Motion by Steve Carr with a second by Robin James to approve the minutes for the August 24, 2020 Board Meeting.

**Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed**

Motion by Robin James with a second by Linda Graban to approve the minutes for the August 25, 2020 Facilities Advisory Committee Meeting.

**Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed**

**Questions and Comments from the Board:** None

**Questions and Comments from the Public:** None

**Old Business:**

**Updated Regarding Start of the 2020-2021 School Year:** Superintendent Susan Smith provided Suicide Prevention Pamphlets to all Board Members. She advised all staff participate in the mandatory training every five years. With the increased risk during the pandemic, live training was provided on August 25, 2020.

District-wide committees have been busy developing plans to meet the needs of students and staff. The search continues for Long Term Ed Tech substitutes. Eastern Maine Community College is offering Boot Camps for Ed Techs and Substitutes to assist with the high demand of these positions. Schedules are being adjusted for Ed Techs and Substitutes to allow Teachers to provide more instruction for remote students.

A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed with the Teachers Association. Superintendent Smith has reached out for legal advice on a few items. Discussion will resume next week.

Nine staff members and Superintendent Smith will be participating in the Cultural Competence Institute training hosted by Maine School Management Association (MSMA). Training consists of ten sessions over ten months on cultural bias. Information, resources, and strategies will be shared with the Student Success committee to develop ways to incorporate with our curriculum.

Student enrollment is consistent with last year's enrollment. First year homeschool enrollment is a little higher than last year at this time. Child care does not appear to be an issue for families at this time. Bus transportation is heavier on Pod B days than Pod A. We are assisting Brewer with their United Technology Center student transportation needs. Adult chairs have been received at Holbrook and Holden; Eddington is still waiting. Student desks are expected to arrive Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at Holden and Eddington. Cots have been ordered for Eddington. We have enough PPE on hand, but are ordering additional supplies. We are waiting on face shields, additional hand sanitizer and stands, gowns, and read-my-lips masks. Technology continues to have an issue on Pod A days at Holbrook. George has been able to reboot the server

and steps are being taken to figure out the issue. Technology Committee is meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2020. They are tasked with brainstorming ways to improve virtual teaching with students (ie. videoconferencing). On Demand Tutoring (TutorMe) is set up and ready for students. We are waiting on a signed contract with language to include following FERPA and COPPA laws.

Building walk throughs have been completed weekly. We are ready to start moving students slowly to "Green" status. The gradual move will begin Monday, September 21, 2020 with Grades One, Three, and Five. Discussion took place on why all grades could not return to all in-person instruction. Cherie Faulkner asked what the rationale was on deciding what grades return and how was it fair to families. Superintendent Smith advised transportation, desks, staff, teacher input, class size, and classroom size were all factors in the transition. Students who are currently remote will stay all remote until the end of the first trimester. Steve Carr added if the District doesn't have the supplies needed, they can't safely return all students at the same time. John Hutchins added the Board agreed from the beginning, this would be a slow return to all in-person instruction to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Linda Graban stated she is glad the district is moving forward with returning students but is concerned about starting some grades and not others. She asked if there are any legal concerns. Superintendent Smith stated there was no legal concerns and many districts are starting school or returning students in this same process. Superintendent Smith advised more work is needed on classroom size and reworking learning space at Holbrook along with the need for desks in order to return grades six through eight to all in-person instruction. She is hopeful to have plans ready in the next few weeks. Holly Whitmore asked what else was needed to return grades six through eight. Superintendent Smith stated counter tops may need to be removed from some classrooms to create more space, plans for utilizing the gym and auditorium, and staff. Ms. Whitmore asked if students in these grades would be able to return in the next three weeks. Superintendent Smith advised a plan would be ready in the next three weeks, but not likely for students to return that quickly.

Linda Graban asked if sports would be offered. Superintendent Smith advised the priority is to get students back for all in-person learning. Extra-curricular activities are being discussed, but will not be sport teams. The Holbrook Rec asked about using the school facilities and Superintendent Smith denied. We received a stern reminder from the insurance company on the risk associated with sports during the pandemic.

Holly Whitmore asked what has been added for remote instruction. Superintendent Smith advised the Technology Committee is meeting Wednesday, September 15, 2020 to discuss options. Teachers are not comfortable with live streaming. The TutorMe program was purchased as an option for remote learning. Tracy Roberts, Holden Resident stated she is very pleased to see student start moving to all in-person instruction and how creative teachers have been with out of the box thinking and appreciates the plans forward movement. She is disappointed it will take several weeks for all students to return. Superintendent Smith advised it was due to class sizes, desks have not all been received yet, transportation concerns, classroom space, and class size. She also stated there have been some smaller problems they have been working through.

#### **New Business:**

**Synchronized Instruction:** Superintendent Smith advised the all remote "Red" schedules were in the Board Packet. George Cummings, RSU 63 Technology Director provided a handout outlining synchronized learning challenges. Heather Charity stated she would like to see more video instruction for remote students and accountability. She feels students need mandatory class time to connect with teachers for instruction. John Hutchins stated he assumed it would be more cost effective to invest in more ed techs to help free up teachers for live instruction to remote students. He asked if the Board wanted to form a committee to focus on improving remote instruction or add Board members to the Technology Committee. Holly Whitmore stated she does not want to take teachers away from in person instruction for student at school and felt asynchronous instruction was the best way to provide live instruction to all students. Mr. Hutchins advised teachers are still navigating this new school year. It is taking them longer to create lesson plans as they now have two lessons to plan (in-person and remote). Patience is key. David Norman, Holden resident asked how we could speed up the process for remote learning as December is right around the corner and we cannot wait too long. Superintendent Smith recommended having the Board join the Technology Committee and the committee meet every two weeks rather than monthly. She stated she is confident plans will come together.

**Teacher and Administrator Professional Growth and Performance Evaluation Pilot:** Superintendent Smith advised changes have been made to the State Laws governing Teacher and Administrator Professional Growth and Performance Evaluation. The District is going to pilot some changes and bring the results to the Board at a later date for further discussion and implementation.

**Van Proposals:** Van proposals were due and opened today. Budget and Finance Committee reviewed the proposals at their meeting today. As the van will be purchased with COVID-19 grant funding the lowest bid must be accepted. Hermon Motor Company has provided a proposal for two different vans, same year and make, different models and mileage, for the same price of \$18,350.00. Steve Carr, Budget and Finance Committee Chair recommends Jake Morgan, Facilities and Transportation Director view and test drive the vehicles to decide which one is the best fit.

Motion by Linda Graban with a second by Cherie Faulkner to approve the van proposal from Hermon Motor Company for a 2019 Dodge Grand Caravan in the amount of \$18,350.00.

**Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed**

**Dates of Next Committee Meeting:**

Technology Committee Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 3:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

Facilities Advisory Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 5:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

Board Meeting: Monday, September 28, 2020 at 6:30pm, Holbrook Middle School

Board Workshop: Monday, September 28, 2020 at 7:00pm, Holbrook Middle School with Eileen King

Budget and Finance Committee Meeting: October 13, 2020 at 5:00pm, Holbrook Middle School

School Renovation Revolving Fund Bond Hearing: October 13, 2020 at 6:00pm, Holbrook Middle School

**Additional Questions and Comments from the Public:** David Norman, Holden resident stated he does not want the Bangor technology issues to get in the way of this Boards decision because the students here need better remote instruction.

**Questions and Comments from the Board:** None.

**Adjournment:** At 8:25pm, motion by Heather Charity with a second by Steve Carr to adjourn the meeting.

**Vote: 7 Approved; 0 Opposed**

Respectfully submitted by,



Susan M. Smith

RSU #63 Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction

**Approved: October 13, 2020**