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Note: When feasible, TRSB meetings are videotaped. These meeting minutes reflect only a basic summary of the meeting topics, discussion, and action. The Vimeo recording of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/trsd>
Materials presented at the board meeting may be viewed at: [School Board Meeting Agenda Materials](#)

Timberlane Regional School Board Meeting Minutes

Regular Board Meeting
December 5, 2024
7:00 PM

Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order

Board Members Present

Katie Knutsen, Mark Sherwood, Kim McCormick, Shauna Manthorn, Brienna Woodworth, Jack Sapia, Donald Woodworth, Paul LeCain, Alyssa Kowalczyk

Absent: Justin Krieger, Superintendent

Seated at the Board Table

Sandra Allaire, Assistant Superintendent
Chris Martin, Director of Operations
Abigail Robinson, Student Representative

Administrators Present

Mark Pedersen, Director of Secondary Education

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Abigail Robinson presented her school-wide report, highlighting events across the District. On December 9th at the High School, the Class of 2028 will have a Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt. Winter team photos will be taken on December 16 and 17. There will be an Early Release on Wednesday, December 11th. Atkinson Academy held an Anti-Bullying Presentation for Grades 3 through 5. Spirit Week will be held the week of December 16th. Danville Elementary will be having an Academic Night. The PTA is hosting a holiday shopping event. Pollard School celebrated Spirit Week. Sandown North will be hosting a holiday shopping event. At TLC, they will be hosting a shopper's event tomorrow in conjunction with the Town's Tree Lighting Ceremony. Staff participated in the Giving Tree program. This is the last week of Fall enrichment groups. Winter sports are underway at the Middle School. They will be holding Spelling Bee semi-finals this week and finals will be next Friday.

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DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS – No speakers

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to move the remaining 30 minutes for Delegates and Individuals to the end of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood
Motion passed: 9-0-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Sapia motioned to accept the regular public meeting minutes of November 21, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. Woodworth Motion passed: 9-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the non-public minutes of November 21, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 9-0-0

CURRENT BUSINESS

a. TRHS 2025-2026 Program of Studies

Mr. Pedersen presented the Program of Studies as a First Read. He explained this is reviewed annually by the School Board. He provided an overview of the changes that have been made and the courses that have been archived.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the First Read of TRHS 2025-2026 Program of Studies. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood. Motion passed 9-0-0

b. Policies

Policy EBCA and Policy GBEB came before the Board for a Second Read. Mrs. Manthorn explained that approval of these two policies need to be tabled and they will be brought back before the Board.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to table the approval of Policy EBCA and Policy GBEB. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed: 9-0-0

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c. Warrant Articles

Mrs. Knutsen indicated the citizens' petitions have been moved from Articles 9-11 to Articles 3, 4 and 5.

ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Dr. Martin presented her Administrators' report. Special Education presented their budget to the Budget Committee and it was \$500,000 less than the previous year. She commented the PAC has a busy and amazing schedule coming up. She thanked all the Fall coaches for a wonderful season and for the great sportsmanship here. There will be College Sports signings in the next couple of weeks. They have some re-ignited interest in the Facilities Director position.

PERSONNEL REPORT

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the professional of nomination of Shannon Anastasia, School Nurse at Sandown North. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood
Motion passed: 9-0-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REPORTS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Woodworth is on the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and he commented on the curriculum and instruction work that was done to prepare the Program of Studies. He was impressed with the work Mr. Pedersen did and to create new opportunities for engineering which they had been concerned about. They are in the process of fast tracking some of the courses for us. He is excited about how some teachers have stepped up to make that possible.

Mrs. Manthorn said Policy met today but they don't have anything quite ready to move forward to the School Board. The next meeting will be on Monday, January 6th at 5:00 PM.

Mr. Sherwood said the two negotiating sessions were cancelled due to illness. Safety Committee met and they heard how their Resource Officer was being integrated into the high school and he has been warmly welcomed by students and staff. During a brainstorming session, it was discussed how we currently have a Fire Explorer Program where students can earn out of school credit and a discussion took place about perhaps looking into extending this to their police officers. They are trying to create more opportunities for the students who may want to go into those fields.

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Mrs. Knutsen said the Budget Committee has met and have gone through all the budgets and another meeting is coming up on Thursday. They will be talking about when they will have the joint meeting with the School Board on December 16th. Their Attorney Jim O'Shaughnessy will be there to speak to some of the warrant articles. This meeting will be held in the High School cafeteria.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Sapia spoke to how Australia just limited access to social media to anyone under the age of 16. He said the data is in now and there is a negative impact that social media is having on their youth. He thinks the Board should explore this, as well as, the entire District.

NH SCHOOL FUNDING FAIRNESS PROJECT

Mrs. Allaire introduced Casey Neil, Director of Outreach and Engagement and Zack Sheehan who is the Executive Director with the NH School Funding Fairness Project. This is a non-profit organization and they are not politically affiliated. Mrs. Allaire explained they invited them to do their presentation because they believe this is an educational opportunity for the community and for them to learn how the process, that N.H. has embraced to fund their schools, impacts us both as taxpayers, students and educators.

Zack Sheehan, with the NH School Funding Fairness Project explained it is their hope that the information he will be providing this evening will help shed some light on the inequities that continue to challenge our school funding. The inequitable education funding in New Hampshire has impacts beyond the taxpayer. Student's educational experiences can be drastically different all over the state. A slide presentation was given, as well as, handouts for those in attendance. There is information and graphs to show how the students in Timberlane compare to the rest of the state.

At the end of the presentation, the School Board opened it up to the public for a Q & A session.

Q: Will this presentation be available to the public on line?

A: Yes. You can view it at: fairfundingnh.org/Timberlane

Q: Are the constraints we are operating under any different from other states and how are they tackling with the same questions?

A: No state does it perfectly. It is a complicated issue. In Vermont, about 90% comes from the state. They have a lot of problems also with how the funds are distributed. Massachusetts has a program where there is a minimal local contribution from taxpayers. There are things that can be learned from other states.

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Q: It was stated that federal funding will likely be reduced over the next few years. How does that affect our local and state taxes?

A: Local property taxes would carry the burden.

Q: The first year of SWEPT when it was implemented, was that a uniform rate for the very first year?

A: Yes it was. The caveat was the state has a formula uniform within a few cents.

Q: At this point, SWEPT is not technically a state tax?

A: That is correct. Currently all SWEPT taxes go from the homeowner to the municipality and stays there. It does not go to the state.

Q: For the donor towns that have negative tax rates, how does that affect the tax rates of the recipient towns?

A: There are no donor or recipient towns because every SWEPT dollar stays local.

Q: Who is responsible for making the system the way it is right now?

A: In general, state level policy makers.

Q: As local taxpayers, we just can't work within our local school district and try to resolve this with budgets, we have to do other things, correct?

A: Yes, that is the argument they are making. They want every community to be on an even playing field.

Q: Have they been able to make presentations like this one for the representatives at the state house?

A: They try to and will often do webinars.

Q: A comment was made that additional taxes are not the answer. The over taxation in this town is \$5,000 per student. Adding taxes doesn't result in lowering the burden on the local taxpayer because the school systems will simply spend more.

A: If and how the school budget changes, we have a democracy and the taxpayers vote on it and elect school board officials. They also are able to debate for or against a budget. That is how it works.

Q: Is your organization or any other group, actually trying to define an adequate cost per student in New Hampshire?

A: We do not have a number. The two ongoing lawsuits are effectively trying to do that.

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Q: Where does the NH School Funding Fairness Project get its funding to operate as a non-profit?

A: Just like any other nonprofit. They get their funding through grants, individual private donors and foundations. There is no state or federal funding or from any school districts or state agencies.

Q: Even if the current lawsuits get positive results, you will get push back from the richer towns because they would have to contribute more to the poorer towns who are not being as well funded. How would that impact things?

A: Just like everything else they do, it calls for talking to a lot of people and trying to engage them in conversation and ask what their concerns are. It is definitely a challenge because there would be some shifts.

The question and answer period concluded at 9:00 PM.

Mrs. Knutsen thanked the NH School Funding Fairness Project for coming down to talk with us and do this presentation.

There was no further public business before the school board. Mrs. Knutsen closed the meeting at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Mahoney
Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Board on December 19, 2024