

APPROVED

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 19, 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, Jack Sapia,
Donald Woodworth, Alyssa Kowalczyk

Excused absence: Paul LeCain, Brienna Woodworth

Seated at the Board Table

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

Administrators Present

Mark Pedersen, Director of Secondary Education
Lucy Canotas, Director of Elementary Education
Fran DeCinto, Director of Human Resources (arrived at 8:55 pm)

STUDENT, STAFF, FAMILY SHARE

Mr. Kelly, Social Studies teacher at the high school, brought five seniors from his AP Government class. There was a presentation recently by the NH Funding Fairness Project and that group also visited with this high school class and they were led through an inquiry project that would allow students to think about public school funding in New Hampshire. The students shared some of those things that they have learned. They engaged in a two-step school funding simulation. They looked at the financial constraints of two different school districts and discussed how to allocate resources to best serve the students. One of the schools was adequately funded and the other was not. They connected the simulation to their own personal experience at the high school. The students in the class wrote notes on what they feel are

APPROVED

important to an adequate education. Some points mentioned were the wide variety of choices in the cafeteria. They commented on their amazing theatre program but feel it would help to have a little more funding for the program. In regards to safety, they feel very strongly on having a crossing guard. They also commented on the nice bathrooms at the PAC, however, the bathrooms in the high school building are in much need of improvement. One of the students stated how so many teachers do so much for the kids and she hopes they could receive a higher pay to attract good teachers and to keep the good teachers they have.

After their presentation, some students were interested in attending a Budget Committee meeting in hopes they would have an opportunity to speak to them about this issue. Mrs. Knutsen said they do allow some time at the beginning of the meeting to speak, but it isn't a back and forth like what they are having now.

Mr. Woodworth also encouraged the students to bring their concerns to Mr. Vaccarezza. It would be very helpful for him to hear from the students.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Abigail Robinson presented her school-wide report, highlighting events across the District. There was a coin drive at the high school to raise money for Mealy's Meals. They raised \$797.00. Staff gave out free hot cocoa and cookies during lunch. Holiday concerts took place. A sports update was given. Atkinson Academy students created handmade cards for the Seniors in the community. Danville did a clothing drive for the Epilepsy Foundation. Sandown North students performed at the PAC. TLC participated in a themed spirit week. The middle school had their spelling bee on December 13, 2024.

DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS

Michael Boucher of Atkinson addressed the Board. He spoke in support of tuition free full day kindergarten. There is positive data that show the benefits to full day kindergarten. There is a need for it in this district and he believes the cost if feasible.

MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to move the remaining 27 minutes for Delegates and Individuals to the end of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood
Motion passed: 7-0-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the regular public meeting minutes of December 5, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk **Motion passed: 7-0-0**

APPROVED

CURRENT BUSINESS

a. Eagle Scout PAC Patio Project

Cameron Stack came before the Board to present his Eagle Scout proposed project and is seeking approval for the project. His project consists of a 20 X 20 foot patio in front of the Timberlane Performing Arts Center to be used as an outdoor performance space and for other uses for parents and students. It will be made of paver stones with a brick border. There are no anticipated costs to the district. He plans to fundraise by selling bricks with engravings of the families or person's names. He expects to start construction on 4/29/25 for completion by 5/4/25. This project has been approved by the Daniel Webster Council BSA.

Mr. Sapia offered to help out with anything he can.

Mrs. Manthorn suggested the possibility of including bench seating on the patio.

MOTION: Mr. Sherwood motioned to approve the PAC patio project by Cameron Stack as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Manthorn. Motion passed 7-0-0

b. Ad Hoc Early Childhood Committee Presentation

Mr. Pederson and Mrs. Canotas presented their report from the Ad Hoc Early Childhood Committee.

Mrs. Canotas explained initially there were two groups and they decided to join groups which made more sense to work together. Phase I involved studying the staffing, facilities, and fiscal impact. She described their research and highlighted the benefits of free full day kindergarten. They had listening tours and cost seemed to be the barrier to full day kindergarten. Currently, there is inequitable access for those families who can afford full day kindergarten and those families who cannot. There is a noticeable difference in the students who attended full day kindergarten when they enter Readiness and First Grade.

Mr. Pedersen stated that transportation is available to and from school. He provided a map of New Hampshire depicting the majority of towns in New Hampshire who offer non-tuition based kindergarten. The district currently employs 13 full time and two half time teachers. They would increase the half time positions to full time employees.

Mrs. Knutsen asked if they received any negative or push back from the community. Mr. Pedersen said a few responses involved the fear of taxes going up because of it.

APPROVED

Mrs. Canotas explained everything is reliant of registration.

Mrs. Knutsen questioned whether the towns who offer full day kindergarten presented it to the voters as a warrant article or did they incorporate it into their operating budget. Mrs. Canotas said she has not seen any other districts with a warrant, but many have been full day for as long as 20 to 30 years.

Dr. Martin commented on how extremely thorough this research is. She comes from Mascenic School District and they put kindergarten on the ballot as a warrant and it passed the first time.

Mr. Sapia asked if they were able to identify the performance of the First and Second Graders who did and did not attend full day kindergarten. Mrs. Canotas they did look at some academic data.

Mr. Sapia said the need for intervention down the line could be reduced if they can catch the kids early enough. Mrs. Canotas said the national research certainly supports that.

Mrs. McCormick stated we have obligations to State and Federal laws and the taxpayers. Right now, our obligation is to our youngest learners. We can fully fund full day kindergarten for under \$200,000 with State funding next year. Whatever we can do, it's our obligation to do that.

Mrs. Knutsen stated that the Budget Committee asked us to decrease our budget by 2.6% which we did. They now want us to find 2.4% more in cuts.

Mr. Woodworth finds it offensive and embarrassing we are having a conversation over something that virtually has no impact on anybody in the district in terms of the total dollar amount and have a gain that actually saves us money over time for services that we will be paying for as a result of not doing it.

Mr. Sapia would rather take the money from somewhere in the budget and put it towards this.

MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to ask the Superintendent to find \$150,000 out of the current budget to fully fund full day kindergarten for FY 25/26. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk

Mr. Woodworth would like to hear from the Budget Committee on what they think is not important and where they would suggest we cut.

APPROVED

Mrs. Knutsen said due to the climate of what the Budget Committee is doing and the possibility of a tax cap, she supports this, but not now because of all the stuff that is going on. If it were a warrant article, then she would support it.

The Board voted on the motion and the motion passed 6-1-0 (Knutsen opposed)

Mr. Krieger referred to the two half time positions. In order to create those half time positions, there needs to be a place to put that money so when they are presenting to the Budget Committee, the budget is exactly accurate and presented in the manner it should be.

MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to increase the current two half time Kindergarten positions to two full-time Kindergarten positions for a total increase of one full time employee. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed 6-1-0 (Knutsen opposed)

c. Special Education Budget Transfer

Mr. Krieger presented this on behalf of Mrs. Brooks. She is requesting money from the personnel lines be transferred to the contracted services lines to cover the cost of contracted providers for positions they have not been able to fill. A detailed executive summary was provided for the Board. She is requesting the transfer of \$238,206 from the 3 speech and language pathologists, \$186,095 from the 2 school psychologists and \$1,187,083 from the 33 paraprofessionals along with 1.5 special educators for a total request of \$1,611,384.00. They will continue to try to fill these positions and if they do, they can reduce the contracted position.

Dr. Martin explained how fluid the special education process is.

(Mrs. DeCinto arrived to the meeting at 8:55 pm)

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the budget transfer presented in the executive summary dated December 19, 2024 totaling \$1,611,384.00. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick. Motion passed 7-0-0

d. FY26 CIP Recommended Project List

Mr. Krieger provided a list of the recommended FY2026 projects by the Capital Improvement Committee. The four projects they recommend is Phase I of the high school bathroom renovation, boundary fencing on the secondary main campus, the roof at Danville Elementary, and Phase 3 of the Belfry at Atkinson Academy. The total estimated costs for these projects is \$1,891,740.

APPROVED

The Board discussed these projects. Mr. Sapia would like to look into the cost of installing guardrails in areas where a fence may not be necessary. Maintenance would be more efficient and he would like to lower the cost of that by \$100,000. He stated the scope of work on the bathrooms is very broad and doesn't think we are prepared to do the bathrooms right now.

Mr. Krieger reminded the Board this approval by the Board is only on the projects. If the projects are approved, they can then move forward in seeking the costs.

MOTION: Mrs. Kowalczyk motioned to approve the FY26 CIP recommended projects including Phase I of the High School Bathroom renovation, boundary fencing of secondary main campus, Danville School's roof replacement, and Phase 3 of the Atkinson Belfry. Motion passed 5-0-2 (Sapia, Sherwood abstained)

e. TRHS 2025-2026 Program of Studies

Mr. Pedersen presented the Program of Studies for a Second 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. McCormick motioned to approve the second read and adoption of the 25/26 TRHS Program of Studies including all the proposed changes outlined by Mr. Pedersen tonight. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth Motion passed 7-0-0

f. Pre-K Writing Curriculum

Mrs. Canotas presented the Pre-K: Language Development: Writing curriculum. She explained they are slowly working through changes to the documents that were written at least ten years ago. They are looking at changes to research and increasing our Pre-K curriculum focus and best practices around play and some changes to the writing curriculum. This is before the Board as an approved recommended document.

MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to approve the first read of Pre-K Writing Curriculum. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motioned passed 7-0-0

g. Water Services RFP

Dr. Martin spoke to this and provided the Board with her executive summary of the RFP for Water Service. She explained Pennichuck Water Service Corporation is divesting in roughly

APPROVED

40 water systems as of December 31, 2024. An RFP for water services was due on November 26, 2024 to replace our long-term vendor. Two water service companies responded and she presented the results. They propose moving forward with WhiteWater Water and Wastewater Solutions.

Their proposal was comprehensive, including testing materials and other supplies and they have been established since 1982.

MOTION: Mr. Sherwood motioned to approve entering into a contract with WhiteWater Water and Wastewater Solutions for districtwide water services. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed 7-0-0

h. SY25/26 Tuition Rates

Mr. Krieger reviewed the proposed FY2026 tuition rates. He is looking for Board approval of the rate sheet provided.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve SY 25/26 tuition rates presented in the executive summary dated December 19, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed 6-0-1 (McCormick abstained)

i. Policies

Mrs. Allaire spoke to this. Policy JLP – Parental Notification of and Involvement in Student Welfare is a new policy which we do not have. The law new law is RSA 186:11 Section IX(e). That law amends a current law that exists and we have a policy already relative to that law which is Policy IGE. It requires districts to provide parents with advance notice anytime there is instruction relative to potentially controversial materials. Parents can opt their child out of instruction and be given an alternative assignment. This is a policy we already have. The amendment to that law has a new clause that is specific to parental notification of an involvement to student welfare. Mrs. Allaire read the new law regarding changes to a student's mental health and emotional wellbeing. A school district may not adopt policies, procedures or student support forums that prohibit school district personnel from notifying a parent about his/her student's mental health, emotional or physical health or wellbeing.

The second aspect to this new law also references a different RSA, RSA 169:C (3) relative to public safety, welfare and the Child Protection Act. The one unique circumstance in which a staff member would be OK to withhold information is if they had just cause to suspect that by

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve Policy JLP as a First and Second Read for adoption. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed 6-0-1 (Sapia abstained)

APPROVED

disclosing certain information with a parent, it might potentially be putting a child at risk physically, mentally, emotionally under the Child Protection Act.

j. Warrant Articles

Mrs. Knutsen presented the warrant articles for review. Mr. Krieger commented on warrant article #2. They hope to have that number from the Budget Committee on December 26, 2024. In regards to Warrant Article #4, the lease purchase agreement, some of the petitioners were at the Budget Committee meeting and the intent of that warrant is not to be retroactive. Their intent is to look forward and to restrict the district from accessing any future monies to that lease. That will have to play out at Deliberative Session in terms of making that citizens petition reflect the intent of the petitioners. They expect to have closure very soon on the CBA agreements in Warrant Article 6 and 7.

k. FY26 Default Budget

Mr. Krieger spoke to the default budget. He explained the default budget as defined in NH RSA 40:13 IX (b). The RSA describes the statutory formula that is required to determine the amount of the default budget. The RSA states “In calculating the default budget amount, the governing body shall follow the statutory formula which may result in a higher or lower amount than the proposed operating budget.” Mr. Krieger explained this same formula as it applies to specifics for Timberlane. He explained they start with the FY24 Voted budget and add or subtract debt service, contracts, and obligations. They then subtract from the voted budget, one time expenditures in FY24. Next, they subtract eliminated positions in the FY25 proposed budget and that final figure is what equals the FY25 default budget.

MOTION: Mr. Woodworth motioned to approve the FY2026 Default Budget in the amount of \$90,873,583.00 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Sapia Motion passed 7-0-0

ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Dr. Martin presented her Administrators' report. Mr. Vaccarezza and herself, along with alternates to the CIP Committee, went to Keene High School last Friday to tour the bathroom renovation along with Keene's Business Administrator and Facilities Director. She gave kudos to Mark Pasquini for applying for an outdoor journey fund from the Appalachian Mountain Club. He received a grant for 24-25 kids for up to \$5,000 to have two trips to stay overnight in a choice of huts in the woods. Jazz Allstate is February 7 through February 8 at Pinkerton Academy. Classical All States will be held at Bow High School on April 3 through April 5. The Chamber Allstate is not an overnight trip and they will have 15 students participate in it.

APPROVED

Mrs. Allaire stated we have three schools in our district who have applied for robotics grants in New Hampshire. One of those schools was the middle school. The two middle school Lego

robotics teams competed at the regional competition and one of those teams qualified for states and received an award for robot design. They went to the state level and finished 15th out of 50 teams around New Hampshire. We have a partnership at our high school between our Science Department and Army and DEKA Research in Manchester. Those companies have partnered with school districts to bring real world engineering practices around generating bio manufactured devices that are manufactured to replicate things to treat medical issues that range from heart problems to diabetes. They also did career explorations. Last year they hired a Child Find Coordinator for the Early Learning Center. On January 13th, they will be conducting screenings connected to Child Find at Sandown Central from 11:00 to 2:00.

Mr. Krieger would like the School Board to understand what he will be bringing to the Budget Committee on December 26th. They had their joint meeting on December 16th. With the School Board's direction, the administration presented a budget and despite the rising costs of goods and services, despite that the district has seven competitive bargaining agreements in place with its staff, despite the fact that we have continued to fund capital improvements and despite the fact that we have not impacted any student programming, the district administration presented a budget that was \$2.4 million less than the last voted budget and the first percentage decrease in a year to year change in a budget in over a decade. The Budget Committee had a vote Monday night asking for further reductions of \$4 million. That vote failed. They had a second vote and that passed. They are looking for an additional \$2.4 million in reduction ideas. On December 26th, he will bring a menu of variable pathways for the Budget Committee to consider as a means of voting to reduce the budget by that \$2.4 million. They will take the form in three different categories. Those will be what the principals and directors are doing with their department or building budgets, adjusted projections, and staff, programs, and capital money for facilities. These are not going to be district recommendations. Instead, this is going to be information for the Budget Committee to consider toward their goal for maintaining their budget goal while allowing the district to meet its most minimal required obligations.

Mrs. Knutsen will reach out to the Chair of the Budget Committee to see if the School Board will be able to participate in the discussion at the upcoming joint meeting.

PERSONNEL REPORT

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the professional of resignation of Erica Shovein, Special Education Coordinator at TRHS and Catherine Jackson, Special Education Teacher a TRHS. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 7-0-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REPORTS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

APPROVED

Mr. Sherwood commented that they will be discussing negotiations later, but he commented they have met four times since the last school board meeting.

Mrs. Manthorn will have a Wellness Committee meeting in January and a Policy meeting on Monday, January 6th.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Woodworth said that last night, about 30 alumni of the wrestling program came to watch the Pinkerton match. The night was also a tribute to cancer survivors. One of the people in the alumni group graduated in 1971 and he got to see his grandson win his first match in front of a large crowd. That man is Mrs. Knutsen's father who is a cancer survivor.

Mr. Sapia commented on watching Mr. Woodworth and Barry do a broadcast on YouTube and thought they did a great job. He asked Dr. Martin if they could put a reinforced roll of poly from where the tennis court gate is. He doesn't want any salt getting near the concrete. Dr. Martin will call the vendor on what they would recommend.

There was no further public business before the Board.

**MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3, Paragraph II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick
Motion passed 7-0-0**

The Board was polled:

D. Woodworth – yes Knutsen – yes Sherwood – yes Sapia – yes Manthorn – yes
McCormick – yes Kowalczyk - yes

Motion passed 7-0-0 to enter non-public at 9:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Mahoney
Recording Secretary

APPROVED

Approved by the School Board on January 2, 2025