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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
February 20, 2025
7:00 PM

Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order

Board Members Present

Katie Knutsen, Mark Sherwood, Kim McCormick, Brienna Woodworth,
Donald Woodworth, Alyssa Kowalczyk, Shauna Manthorn

Excused absence: Jack Sapia, Paul LeCain

Seated at the Board Table

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

Administrators Present

Maria Watkins, Business Administrator/CFO

Mrs. Knutsen called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to approve the public minutes of 1/23/25 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 7-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to approve the public minutes of 1/16/25 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Manthorn Motion passed: 7-0-0

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MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the public minutes of 1/27/25 as written. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick Motion passed: 6-0-1 (Mrs. Woodworth abstained)

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the public minutes of 2/6/25 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 6-0-1 (Mrs. Manthorn abstained)

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to approve the public minutes of 2/13/25 as written. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood Motion passed: 7-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to approve the Deliberative Session minutes of 2/6/25 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 7-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the non-public minutes of 1/23/25. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk Motion passed: 7-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the non-public minutes of 2/13/25. Seconded by Mr. Woodworth. Motion passed: 7-0-0

Dr. Martin acknowledged Tiffany Eaton of Danville Elementary as the 2025 Assistant Principal of the Year by the New Hampshire Association of School Principals. Tiffany Eaton addressed the Board and described her experience working at Danville Elementary and is honored to receive this award.

Dr. Martin introduced Mr. Ken Clark who has inspired kids from all over the state for 32 years. He was presented the Service to the Profession Award for three decades of service to jazz musicians around the state. Mr. Clark thanked the NH Music Educators Association for recognizing him.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Abigail Robinson presented her school-wide report and highlighted happenings around the district. Some of the highlights included Project Hope will be held at the high school on March 8th in the PAC. All elementary schools hosted Jeans Day on Friday to collect money for relief efforts for those impacted by the wildfires in California. They raised \$595 to donate to the American Red Cross. In the middle school, 7th graders are working on research projects on numerous topics including cell phone use in schools, whether video games are harmful or beneficial, along with many other topics. These topics will be discussed in a formal debate.

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DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS

Michael Boucher of Atkinson spoke in support of full day Kindergarten. He asked the Board to consider a review on how tuition is considered. He also expressed concern with the School Board's legal counsel. He has not provided the greatest legal advice to the public. He would have expected better advice from him and believes it is time to look into new legal counsel.

Nolan Pelletier of Plaistow spoke in regards to Article 2. He stated they are bringing it back onto the agenda tonight without posting legal notice and reopening it. It is his understanding the superintendent reached out to individuals who spoke publicly to Article 2 at the Deliberative Session to come to the meeting and speak tonight. He claims this is electioneering on the highest level. He will be contacting the District's attorney.

Lou Broad spoke as a representative to the Timberlane Teacher's Association. He stated that Article 2, as amended, will likely result in sizeable staff cuts. They will lose the momentum they had with building our staff back up this past year. He asked everyone to vote no on Warrant Article 2.

Julia Doherty of Atkinson is in her 9th year of teaching in another district, she is a parent and taxpayer. She stated that tax increases are not easy, but public education benefits the entire community. She attended the Deliberative Session and described it as eye opening.

Jessica Merrick of Atkinson is concerned if the \$81.9 million passes. She said nobody likes high property taxes but we all care about education. We have an obligation to fund high quality education and asked everyone to vote no on Article 2. Further stating that we can't afford not to.

Chris Tardif of Atkinson attended Timberlane and spoke to Article 2. He moved back into the district 10 years ago to Atkinson. He stated there are amazing teachers in the district. The solution is not slashing \$6.6 million from the proposed budget.

Ryan Labrecque of Plaistow believes the district is doing a lot of good things and said that is not a question. It was never a question. It comes down to over budgeting. He said when they go to Deliberative Session, they need to be presented with a reasonable budget. That is all anyone is asking for. He further believes the district could go lower than \$81 million.

Chris Citorik of Atkinson is disturbed by what he has seen and heard. He is very grateful for Atkinson Academy. It is a place of loving, kindness, and caring. The students learn to be good people. He added that taking away resources is insane. He was a former high school teacher and they owe the teachers their support.

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MOTION: Mr. Sherwood motioned to add the last six minutes to the end of the meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Woodworth Motion passed: 7-0-0

Mrs. Knutsen said when the Board was asked by the Budget Committee to find \$2.4 million worth of cuts, two of the options had staff in them. She added that some members who stated there would be no cuts to personnel were former school board members, Brian Boyle and Sheila Lowes. This Board never said that with an \$81 million budget, staff would not be cut. That simply is not true.

CURRENT BUSINESS

a. FY2024 Financial Audit Report

Mrs. Watkins introduced Michael Campo, a CPA from Plodzik & Sanderson. They received the FY2024 annual audit report with no findings for any of our schools. Mr. Campo presented the FY2024 audit report. He explained they perform a risk-based audit and review the numbers so the taxpayer can say they can rely on these numbers. That is their goal. He highlighted the points they check and described the audit process which takes typically four days.

Mr. Sherwood asked if Mr. Campo could provide guidance on what should be held in surplus. Mr. Campo suggested they look at the past 3 years. They should start from 2022 through 2025 which would be good years to use and look at the actuals in monthly expenses and use a percentage of that.

b. Annual Report

Mr. Krieger provided the Annual Report to the School Board for approval according to Policy CM. He explained they will be made available to the public on March 11, 2025. There was no input from the Board.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the 2024 Annual Report. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed: 7-0-0

c. Citizen Line Item Reductions to FY26 Proposed Budget

Mr. Krieger said per the direction of the School Board, he had reached out to eight individuals who either voiced their opinion at Deliberative Session regarding Article 2 and the budget reductions of \$6.6 million to reflect a bottom line proposed budget of \$81.9 million. The purpose of him reaching out was to seek collaborative partnerships with these folks who

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expressed line item specific reductions in the budget and he could then present to the Board those ideas. For the folks he reached out to, four of them didn't respond and two responded but declined.

He had an extensive phone call from one, and he received a detailed email that identified line items from another. That community member was able to get to \$4.6 million in reductions. They were using primarily two lines to do that, one was salaries and benefits of personnel, and the other was debts and principal interests of the lease and the third was capital money in the CIP. In addition, there were some suggestions for us to look closer at other line items that included books and information resources, legal fees, other school board services, dues and fees to see if we could get to the \$6.6 million figure.

He referred to the phone call he had and there was nothing submitted in writing, but their perspective to him was we should be trimming staff and removing administrators from the district but also looking at positions in personnel and that would be where salaries could come from. Mr. Krieger appreciated the phone call and the email he received. He added that we have an internal team meeting scheduled here on March 12th, the day after voting, so we can begin to plan in terms of the direction we can give the Board regarding what the voters determined.

d. Policies

Mrs. Manthorn presented the Board with two policies up for First Read. The Board reviewed Policy EBBB (Indoor Air Quality & Water Quality). Revisions were recommended by the NH School Board Association.

Mrs. Knutsen asked for the cost to test the water on a monthly basis. Dr. Martin said she would be happy to provide that information and she will bring in a report from the State so they can see what their standard timelines are.

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to approve Policy EBBB as a First Read. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood. Motion passed: 7-0-0

The Board reviewed Policy JLCE (Emergency Care and First Aid). Mrs. Manthorn explained there has been some language added and removed.

Mrs. Allaire stated this policy was vetted by their lead nurse. They were using New Hampshire School Board Association language as recommended. Some of the language that existed was moved to a different section.

MOTION: Mr. Sherwood motioned to approve Policy JLCE as a First Read. Seconded by Mrs. Manthorn. Motion passed: 7-0-0

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ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Krieger presented District metrics to the Board. The first metric is the per pupil cost. Timberlane ranks 34th out of 161 districts as having the lowest per pupil cost. They have 200 less students than in 2019. Since 2021, they had a net gain of 30 students. Since 2018, the District had a reduction of 31.5 positions. We have 20 vacant positions. Regarding contracted services, they are contracting with 61 discreet individual folks who are working directly with our students. He provided a breakdown of those positions.

The last metric is the same one they showed at the Deliberative Session. We brought in \$1.9 million less in revenue and we spent \$7.1 million more than at this time last year. \$4.6 million of the \$7.1 million is in salaries and benefits. We have 11.6 more professional positions hired and employed at the end of January than we did in the prior year.

Mr. Krieger reviewed the changes to the Warrant Articles since Deliberative Session. Article 3 had a language change as mandated by the State of NH for Kindergarten. Article 4 had a language change regarding the tax cap. Article 5 had a language change and is now an advisory only article. Article 6 had a language change is now an advisory only article.

Mr. Sherwood stated the taxes will be less next year regardless if the default budget passes or the operating budget passes.

Mr. Krieger said they have received the EEI contract for work to be done on the CIP list. They will hold off signing that contract until after the vote.

Mr. Krieger announced there will be a dodgeball game played between the 5th graders and staff on March 5th from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Mrs. Allaire added that music will be provided by the Director of Technology.

Mrs. Allaire congratulated sophomore Danielle Bates who won 1st place in the high jump at the State Winter Track Meet. She congratulated Tiffany Eaton. She recognized other staff as educators of the year in their disciplines. Sarah Chooljian at the Middle School was awarded Family & Consumer Science Educator of the Year. Dr. Joy Fraga Muller at the high school was awarded Environmental Science Educator of the year. Corey Dionne is an 8th grade Science teacher. She was nominated by a parent to be WZID's local radio station Educator of the Month.

Dr. Martin read a letter that was received from Helen Galway of Atkinson to Mr. Samuel Lyons. She attended the Music Department String Quartet performance at the PAC. She had written a compliment message stating it was an event to behold.

PERSONNEL REPORT

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MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the professional resignations of Angela Labrecque, Kindergarten Teacher, Pollard and Andrea Simkins, Special Education Teacher, Danville Elementary. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick Motion passed: 7-0-0

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the professional retirements of Helen Blanchard, Special Education Teacher, TRMS; Patricia Collins, Media Generalist, Pollard; Barbara Gallant, Guidance, Atkinson Academy; Beth Runnells, French Teacher, TRHS; Stephen Scanlon, Excel Study Coordinator, TRHS and thanked them for their commitment to our students and community. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick. Motion passed: 7-0-0

Mrs. Gallant was present and thanked the Board. She said it was an honor working with such wonderful people in Timberlane.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Woodworth has a CIP meeting on April 14th and a Strategic Planning Meeting on March 20th.

Mrs. McCormick stated the next Curriculum and Assessment Committee meeting will be on March 4th.

Mrs. Manthorn has a Policy Committee meeting on March 6th and the Wellness Committee will meet in April.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Manthorn announced the School Board and Budget Committee will be more available to the public and will be opening themselves up for office hours for people to ask questions, seek understanding, or anything else they need. They will be communicating out when the schedules are set. She added that the modalities will vary and they can meet in whatever format they feel is best.

Mr. Sherwood read a prepared statement he wrote and explained their contractual and required expenses total about \$83 million for 2026. He explained the results if the \$81million passes and he described the options they would be left with. He said that several community members stated they knew exactly where the cuts could come from. When asked how, there was an overwhelming refusal in his mind. If they had a real plan, they would have shared it. They either don't have a plan or their claims are false. This is an ill-advised plan. He does not want to go back to the dark ages.

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DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS (cont'd)

Julia Doherty of Atkinson provided some historical information. If the \$81 million passes, the district will be forced to cut staff. Poor schools lead to lower home values. We must show up and vote no.

Chris Tardif of Atkinson spoke to Article 6 and the possibility of terminating the remainder of the lease. We need to make sure it is passed so that we can continue with the improvements and maintenance of our buildings. We can then try to find a way to work together and seek help from the State to support us in a better way than they do.

There was no other business before the Board. Mrs. Knutsen closed the public meeting at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Mahoney
Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Board on March 6, 2025