

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
September 19, 2024
7:00 PM

Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order

Board Members Present

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

Excused Absence: Alyssa Kowalczyk

Seated at the Board Table

Justin Krieger, Superintendent
Sandra Allaire, Assistant Superintendent

Administrators Present

Lucy Canotas, Director of Elementary Education
Fran DeCinto, Director of Human Resources

STUDENT, STAFF, AND FAMILY SHARE

The Student Leadership Team presented their work with the TRHS Student Climate and Culture based on data analysis of student, family, and staff responses to the surveys administered last school year. Working with staff and administrators, they highlighted their three areas of focus which include student and staff relationships and school safety.

DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS

Carol Hillard of Danville wants the \$17 million returned now. She said people are tired of the ever increasing budget year after year.

Marianne Springer of Danville spoke to the \$3.5 million in surplus funds that the Board voted to retain from the \$17 million. She wants it all returned to the taxpayers.

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Jackie Bellacqua of Danville talked about the 5th grade class at Danville Elementary. One of the two classes have 25 students and feels that is too large for an elementary school. She feels there should be 3 classrooms for Grade 5. She is requesting a motion to be made to waive policy for this year and to revisit and revise the policy on class size, not just for this specific situation in Danville, but for future students and classes at Timberlane.

Kelly Diver of Danville spoke of the struggles her family has due to the increased property taxes. She worries about their ability to heat their home this winter.

Denise Jacquard of Atkinson referred to the unassigned fund balance which she feels apparently was not needed. She talked about the lack of trust she has.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to move the remaining 18 minutes for Delegates and Individuals to the end of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood
Motion passed: 8-0-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Woodworth motioned to accept the regular public meeting minutes of September 5, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick Motion passed: 6-0-2 (Mrs. Woodworth, Mr. Sapia abstained)

MOTION: Mr. Sherwood motioned to accept the non-public meeting minutes of September 5, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick Motion passed: 6-0-2 (Mrs. Woodworth, Mr. Sapia abstained)

CURRENT BUSINESS

a. Unassigned Fund Balance

Mrs. Knutsen read a letter from their legal counsel who provided their legal opinion regarding the process for retaining and expending contingency funds in accordance with state law. It referred to RSA 197:4-b.

Mr. Sherwood stated it is unfortunate that we find ourselves in this position, however, he thinks they can maintain true to what they have stated that it was our intention to give back every dollar in the unassigned fund balance. Now they find themselves in the position of not having the flexibility we thought we would have to prepay on the interest and, as such, the only responsible thing is to return it in its entirety.

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Mrs. Knutsen said this would go back and be reflected in their December tax bill.

MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to amend the contingency votes passed on August 14, 2024 by reducing the contingency amount from 5% to 0% and by striking all other language in these two motions, so that the new motion would be to retain 0% of the 2024 year-end unassigned general funds in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood. Motion passed 8-0-0

Mr. Sapia stated that the School Board does care and they care passionately. Under the pressures they all have, this is the proper thing to do and we are doing what we said from the very beginning.

b. Grade 1 & 2 Health Curriculum

Mrs. Canotas explained they are six to seven years into the curriculum as it is written. They conducted a K-12 Committee over the summer and started to review and make some changes they wanted to make to Health. They have taken a Grade 1 unit and a Grade 2 unit and swapped the grades. She stated this is doable because the standards are grade spanned and not assigned to a specific grade level. They are looking for approval of this switch.

**MOTION: Mrs. McCormick motioned to accept the changes to the Grade 1 and Grade 2 Health Curriculum for a First Read. Seconded by Mrs. Woodworth
Motion passed 8-0-0**

c. Danville Grade 5

Mr. Krieger explained over the course of the last two weeks, many Board members have engaged with administration seeking additional information. That information is in the form of academic performance and student behavioral data from that cohort. They met with families who have expressed concerns and also spoke over the phone and with email. He commented we are right at policy now and they feel, as a group, the Board has enough information to form a decision tonight on how they are going to move forward for this school, this grade level, and these families.

Mrs. Woodworth would like to at least try to look into the possibility of repurposing a position for elementary education teacher. She believes this is not just about academics of that class, it is also about the social and emotional learning in a classroom that has 30 in that class including staff.

Mrs. McCormick questioned where the position would come from. Mr. Krieger stated he would have to take a look at it.

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Mrs. Knutsen asked what the timeline would be to find someone and to reorganize the two classrooms into three classrooms. Mr. Krieger can't say how long it will take to find someone.

Mrs. Allaire said they have already prepared the classroom lists for the three classrooms. She described what they look at when placing those students and that piece has already been done.

Mr. Woodworth said they need to find a good hire and someone who they believe will be successful.

Mr. Sherwood referred to the data presented. It shows the 5th Grade class in Danville has the highest percentage of students who scored higher in Math and Reading and have the lowest percentage of identified students. They are scoring higher in Math and Reading than the other cohorts around the District. He is not certain that all the parents are aware their children are doing better than other schools in this current environment based on standardized test scores. He questioned if they find the appropriate teacher at this point, what are the implications of moving a third of the students into a different classroom with a different teacher. Also, what about the parents who are comfortable with the teacher they have. This might be more detrimental to them both academically and socially than being in a larger class size where academically, at least, they are doing better than their peers.

Mrs. McCormick can see both sides of this issue. She agrees with Mr. Sherwood in stating the policy states a maximum of 25 students in a classroom but it doesn't mean it is the right class size.

Mrs. Woodworth asked if the parents would have the ability to decline a classroom change. Mr. Krieger explained if they get to a point where the Board creates the resources and they hire a quality individual, through that process he thinks they would need to be talking with their administrative group on how they would go through that, but he can't answer that question right now.

Mr. Sapia commented how his own children lost teachers and they did fine. He asked if additional classroom supports would be needed. Mrs. Allaire said they wouldn't be.

Mr. Woodworth explained there are ways to teach with 3 teachers. You don't have to remove them totally from any teacher. If you are creative with it, it doesn't have to be an extreme change.

MOTION: Mr. Sapia motioned to direct the administration to repurpose an unfilled position to generate another full time elementary teacher position. Seconded by Mrs. Woodworth

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Mrs. Knutsen said considering the parameters, in order to be fair across the District, asked whether there are other classes at 25 students. Mrs. Allaire would have to look at that, however, there are other classes that are close to that. Mrs. Knutsen is concerned that we are too far into the year and they have been dealing with this. She believes this Policy needs to go back to the Policy Committee to put more measurable metrics into the policy to make it fair across the District.

Motion passes 6-0-2 (Mrs. Knutsen, Mr. Sherwood abstained)

d. Lead Remediation Grant

Mr. Krieger said the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has a grant available for any remediation we have taken since 2016 to remediate lead in our drinking water. They are looking for authorization to receive that money.

MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to accept and expend the grant funds from the Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund and enter into a grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and authorize Dr. Chris Martin, Executive Director of Operations and Special Projects to sign the grant documents on behalf of the governing body. Seconded by Mrs. McCormick.
Motion passes 8-0-0

e. District Heating Oil 2024/2025 RFP

The Facilities Team went out for sealed proposals for fuel oil for the District schools which are still utilizing fuel oil for heating which are Atkinson Academy, Sandown North, and Sandown Central. The Board reviewed the 4 proposals they received.

The recommendation is to go with Hilton Oil Company who came in with the lowest rate.

MOTION: Mr. Sapia motioned to award Hilton Oil Company the District Heating Oil contract for the 24/25 heating season with an estimated amount of \$125,825.40. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood Motion passes 8-0-0

f. Policies

Mrs. Allaire presented Policy EBCH: Hazardous Chemical Safety Provisions and Hygiene Plan as a First Read. This is a new policy and recommended by legal counsel.

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MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept Policy EBCH as a First Read. Seconded by Mr. Sapia Motion passes 8-0-0

Mrs. Knutsen announced this is Notice of Revocation of Policy ACAC which is Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Process at their October 3rd School Board Meeting because at the last meeting, they voted to adopt the new one and this policy is now obsolete.

g. Annual Meeting & Election Calendar

The Board was provided with the Timberlane Regional School District 2025 Annual Meeting and Election Calendar.

Mrs. Knutsen reviewed the important dates with the Board.

h. Budget Committee Presentation Calendar

Mr. Krieger provided the Budget Committee's proposed schedule which includes the date, meeting time, department head and location presenters.

ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Mr. Krieger announced Abigail Robinson will be joining the Board at their next meeting as the new Student Representative to the School Board.

Mr. Krieger said 18 teams were competing today both at home and away. He recognized Mr. Fantasia and the Athletic Department for having won their fifth Excellence Award.

Mr. Krieger provided a quick update from Dr. Martin. There were some questions about coming back to the Board with some facility staff and historical numbers. Over the last 5 years, they have hired 2.0 FTE maintenance positions. They also added a .5 time Accounts Payable clerk for the Facilities Department. Currently, they are down one maintenance person. They would like Dr. Martin to continue to assess the impact of the lease and the construction projects across the District. She will look to bring back a more robust report to the Board in October.

The high school received a Robotics Education Development Program grant. They have over \$5,000 to expand student participation in Robotics and Engineering.

He recognized Maura Maher and the entire high school team for holding a College Fair this week.

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They will be allowing the fire departments to use TLC at Sandown Central on November 16, 2024 for training purposes.

They are rescheduling the Retirement Celebration from this Fall to the Spring. They will be celebrating those who retired last year and the staff who have put in for retirement this year. That will be held on May 7, 2025.

Open Houses at the elementary schools will start next week and they will have interactive tours for anyone in our community.

PERSONNEL REPORT

a. Personnel Report 1

Mrs. Manthorn read aloud the name the Professional nomination on the electronically-signed personnel report dated September 9, 2024 of Lindsey Rabbitt, Special Education Teacher at TLC.

b. Personnel Report 2

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to accept the professional resignation of Karl Ingoldsby, Facilities Director, SAU. Seconded by Mr. Sherwood. Motion passes 8-0-0

VACANCY REPORT

Mrs. DeCinto presented her job posting report which is very short. Mr. Sapia thanked Mrs. DeCinto for getting this done.

Mrs. Woodworth asked about the vacancy for the Sandown North nurse. Mrs. DeCinto assured her we have a sub right now and we also have a floating nurse position. They are still in the process of recruiting a nurse.

Mrs. DeCinto is requesting a title change for the Sandown Central Kindergarten position. She explained there is a teacher position at Sandown Central that is listed in our payroll system as a Kindergarten Teacher. It was a Special Education Teacher position at the Middle School from 2011 to 2016. This position transferred to Sandown Central in 2017 and the title was changed to Kindergarten Teacher even though it had been filled with Special Education teachers from 2017 to 2024.

Mrs. DeCinto is requesting to change the title back to a Special Education Teacher.

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MOTION: Mrs. Woodworth motioned to change the title from Kindergarten Teacher to Special Education teacher. Seconded by Mrs. Manthorn Motion passes 8-0-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REPORTS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Sapia attended the CIP Committee meeting this week. They discussed what constitutes maintenance versus capital improvement. They pushed back some of the projects that were slated for next year and have asked for additional information to explore some of the things they will now propose. It was a productive meeting.

Mrs. Knutsen said the Budget Committee and the Safety Committee will meet next week.

Mrs. Manthorn said the Policy Committee and Wellness Committee will have their first meetings in October. She had the opportunity to be at the PAC on Saturday for the High School Chorus Camp.

Mr. Sherwood attended the ad hoc Kindergarten meeting and they have done a lot of good work but they feel they need more community input. He thought maybe having a QR Code available in the schools at the Open Houses. This would help let them know what we are discussing regarding Kindergarten. They also want to reach out to their Boards of Selectmen to help get the word out.

Mrs. Woodworth attended the Strategic Planning meeting today and they have some good things coming down.

DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS (cont'd)

John Downing of Sandown thanked the Board for returning all the unassigned fund balance as pledged. He said that knowing that the \$2.1 million already raised for the payment for this school year is still available plus the additional adequacy aid of \$1 million, the lease payment can still be paid in full with another incredibly huge vote right now. The District can still save the \$1.4 million in interest without any issue at all.

There was no further public business before the Board.

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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 Mr. Sherwood Motion passed 8-0-0

The Board was polled:

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

Motion passed 8-0-0 to enter non-public at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Mahoney
Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Board on October 3, 2024