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
October 15, 2026
7:00 PM

Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH

Call to Order
Chair Knutsen called the meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Note: The meeting was intended to begin at 6:30 pm, but needed to hold for official business until a quorum could be established.

Board Members Present

Shawn O'Neil, Alyssa Kowalczyk, Shauna Manthorn, Katie Knutsen, Don Woodworth (*arrived at 7:22 pm*), and Jack Sapia

Excused Absence: Marianne Springer, Paul LeCain, Mark Sherwood

Seated at the Board Table
Justin Krieger, Superintendent
Sandra Allaire, Assistant Superintendent
Noah Darnstaedt, Student Representative

Administrators Present
Maria Watkins, Business Administrator CFO
Mark Pedersesen, Director of Secondary Education
Marc Brander, Director of Facilities
Fran Decinto, Director of Human Resources

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Jack Sapia motioned to approve the October 1, 2026 meeting minutes. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed 3-0-2. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil. Abstain: Knutsen, Manthorn)

Approved

MOTION: Mr. Sapia motioned to approve the October 1, 2026 non-public meeting minutes. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed 3-0-2. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil; Abstain: Knutsen, Manthorn)

Note: Shawn O'Neil would like to disseminate items numbers 1 and 3 (particularly number 1) to the public. It was decided that the SAU review the item and the disclosure question will be returned for discussion in 2 weeks.

STUDENT, STAFF, FAMILY SHARE

*****Note: This was presented prior to the official start of the meeting as there was not a quorum at this time.**

The high school class presidents shared highlights from Spirit Week and discussed the different activities that brought students together throughout the week. Activities included themed dress-up days, senior parking spot painting, a carnival with food, games, and booths, a rock-paper-scissors competition, a pep rally, and a Spirit Week dance. Students also participated in penny wars, with the money raised going to a charity of their choice. The senior class won the overall Spirit Week competition.

The class presidents shared some advice with their fellow students, encouraging them to be confident, get involved, and be themselves. They talked about how high school is what students make of it and encouraged everyone to put themselves out there and take pride in representing their class.

The students also thanked the Family and Consumer Sciences teachers for helping students put together their togas for Spirit Week.

The class presidents mentioned an initiative through the National Honor Society in which members write letters to freshmen and middle school students. The goal is to help younger students feel welcomed and supported while building connections between grade levels.

DELEGATES & INDIVIDUALS

Ms. Kayla Gallagher referenced an incident where a teacher surveyed students about their COVID vaccination status. She was appalled that this was done in the classroom, stressing that teachers should not be political. She would like Mr. Krieger to answer 3 questions to avoid an RTK.

1) Did disciplinary action take place?
2) Is the teacher still employed?
3) What was the timeline from when the incident occurred, the Superintendent was notified, and when/if the parents of the affected students were notified?

Chair Knutsen informed Ms. Gallagher that she would not receive any answers during the meeting as this is not a back-and-forth session. She will have Mr. Krieger email Ms. Gallagher in response to her inquiries.

Approved

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to move the remaining 20 minutes of Delegates and Individuals to the end of the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Sapia. Motion passed 5-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil; Abstain: Knutsen, Manthorn)

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Student Representative, Noah Darnstaedt, shared updates from the high school and schools throughout the district.

At high school, Juniors participated in PSAT testing. Students also took part in ALICE safety training, which included walking to designated rally points. Mr. Darnstaedt shared that going through the procedures helped him feel more comfortable and confident about the school's emergency preparedness.

Mr. Darnstaedt provided an athletics update and mentioned that plaques recognizing Hall of Fame inductees had been added to the school's showcase. He also shared that three seniors had visited the New Hampshire State House to advocate for funding. A Life of an Owl leadership meeting, also under athletics as it is run by Mr. Fantasia, took place earlier in the day. Looking ahead, the marching band was scheduled to perform at a band show in Dover on Saturday, and Jazz All-State auditions were also taking place that day.

Mr. Darnstaedt also mentioned the Atkinson Fall Festival was scheduled for Sunday, Pollard School held its annual fire department assembly, and Sandown North is starting two new enrichment clubs: Painters Workshop and Disney Fun Club.

CURRENT BUSINESS

a. Substitute Paraeducator Daily Rate

Mrs. Decinto proposed adjusting substitute paraeducator compensation following an increase in the regular paraeducator workday from 6.5 to 7 hours. Although the daily substitute rate remained at $115, the additional half-hour effectively reduced the hourly rate from $17.70 to $16.43. Administration recommended maintaining the original hourly rate of $17.70, increasing daily compensation to $123.90.

The adjustment was intended to prevent a reduction in hourly earnings and improve recruitment for paraeducator substitute positions, which account for only 20% of substitute assignments. The district currently has approximately 120 active substitutes serving seven schools, and paraeducator assignments remain particularly difficult to fill.

Board members clarified that the proposed adjustment would have an estimated additional

cost of $3,650 for the current fiscal year. Concerns were raised regarding the complexity of substitute compensation and whether a simplified daily rate would be more appropriate. Administration explained that some paraeducator assignments require only partial-day coverage, making hourly compensation necessary to maintain staffing flexibility and control costs. Board members acknowledged the explanation and expressed an understanding of the need to maintain the existing hourly rate while adjusting daily compensation to reflect the longer workday.

MOTION: Mr. O'Neil motioned to change the substitute paraeducator daily rate to $123.90 from the current daily rate of $115. Seconded by Mrs. Manthorn. Motion passed 5-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil, Knutsen, Manthorn)

b. Overnight Field Trip Request

Mr. Pedersen presented the overnight field for the Student Council to attend the NHASC Fall Conference in Waterville Valley, NH from November 12-13, 2026. The proposed trip would include five (5) Student Council Members and two (2) chaperones. This trip will be self-funded.

During discussion, Board members considered whether routine overnight field trip approvals could be delegated to the Superintendent to streamline the approval process. Members expressed general support for revisiting the current policy, which requires Board approval for overnight trips and certain trips involving missed instructional time or extended travel.

Suggestions included allowing the Superintendent to approve trips that meet established guidelines or granting multi-year approval for recurring trips. Members emphasized the importance of retaining Board oversight for exceptional trips, particularly international travel, where additional considerations regarding student safety, chaperone supervision, and health precautions may be necessary.

The Board agreed to place the field trip approval policy on a future meeting agenda to discuss appropriate parameters and provide direction to the Policy Committee for potential revisions.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve the Student Council overnight field trip to the Fall Conference on November12-13, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Sapia. Motion passed 5-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil, Knutsen, Manthorn)

c. Instructional Resources Plan and Selection Procedure, and Curriculum Development and Review Cycle

Mrs. Allaire presented the School Board with information regarding the Instructional Resource Plan and supporting documents developed in accordance with updated New Hampshire Minimum Standards for School Approval (Ed 306.08). The revised policy requires the Superintendent to maintain a written plan addressing the development, selection, maintenance, and updating of curriculum and instructional resources.

Mrs. Allaire included Procedure IJR, the Instructional Resources Plan and Selection Procedure, and supporting curriculum development and review procedures. The documents outline the district's established curriculum review process, which includes a formal review of each content area approximately every six years, along with ongoing evaluations and updates as needed. All documents received two reviews by the Curriculum Assessment Committee.

Board members acknowledged the extensive work involved and expressed a preference for additional time to review the materials. It was also noted that changes in state requirements could affect the curriculum review timeline.

The Board agreed to consider the presentation a first reading and revisit the documents at the next meeting to allow for additional questions and feedback. As administrative procedures, the documents are informational and do not require formal Board approval.

d. Policies

Policy IC: School Year and School Year Calendar

Assistant Superintendent Allaire presented proposed revisions to Policy IC, School Year, to align with updated New Hampshire Minimum Standards for School Approval (Ed 306) and applicable state requirements. Revisions include updating language regarding coordination of school calendars with regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers.

Ms. Allaire highlighted a provision requiring high school graduation to be scheduled no more than five school days or 30 instructional hours before the end of the scheduled school year. Although this requirement was removed from the updated state regulations, the New Hampshire School Boards Association indicated that it may be reinstated. She explained that removing the provision from district policy would allow greater flexibility in scheduling graduation relative to the end of the school year for other students.

The Policy Committee discussed the change and recommended retaining the existing graduation language as a precaution, particularly since the reason for its removal from state regulations remains unclear. Retaining the provision would maintain current district practices and avoid additional policy revisions should the state reinstate the requirement. It was further

explained that recent regulatory changes reflect a broader shift away from instructional seat time toward competency-based learning.

MOTION: Mr. O'Neil motioned to accept Policy IC for a First Read. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil, Knutsen, Manthorn, Woodworth)

e. Budget to Actual Report

Mrs. Watkins presented the September 2026 Budget-to-Actual Report, noting that the district had collected 31% of its anticipated revenue and expended 19% of its $89.9 million budget, totaling $17,056,284. Of the revenue collected, 88.4% came from taxpayers, 3.5% from local sources, and 8.1% from state and federal sources. Expenditures were distributed among operating costs (31.6%), salaries (33.6%), and benefits (34.8%).Mrs. Watkins acknowledged the district's towns for their cooperation and timely payments in accordance with the established revenue schedule.

The district began September with a cash balance of approximately $13.4 million and ended the month with a balance of $15,823,855.

f. TRHS Envelope Project

Mr. Brander provided an update on the Timberlane Regional High School Envelope Project following the October 14 Facilities Committee meeting with EEI and Banwell Architects. The committee reviewed two proposed project options, including a base option and Option A. Members expressed concerns regarding the overall cost estimates, which were considered higher than anticipated, and requested that EEI refine its proposal and provide more competitive pricing. The committee also requested a detailed breakdown of project costs, including materials, labor, and demolition. The proposed window replacement costs were determined to be within the budgeted amount. Additional pricing concerns included labor expenses and Canadian tariffs. EEI was asked to provide further clarification and revised estimates before additional project decisions are made.

Mr. Brander also discussed the deteriorating condition of the high school's existing windows, which are approximately 26 years old and in deteriorating condition. The committee reviewed replacement options and expressed a preference for durable, cost-effective windows rather than refurbishing the existing wooden components. Board members discussed the potential energy efficiency benefits of the improvements. Members also noted that previous window and HVAC upgrades have contributed to improved classroom comfort and learning conditions.

In response to questions regarding the project timeline, Mr. Brander explained that construction

is anticipated to begin following the conclusion of the 2026–2027 school year. EEI estimated that the work could be completed within approximately two months, beginning with demolition and followed by installation.

The Facilities Committee's next meeting was moved to October 28 to allow for timely review of revised estimates and outstanding questions. Further Board consideration of the project was deferred pending receipt of the additional information.

g. HVAC Filter RFP Results:

Mr. Brander presented the results of the October 2, 2026, HVAC filter bid opening and recommended awarding the contract to Filterbuy, Inc. for $22,634.24 annually. Requests for proposals were distributed to five vendors. The contract provides for quarterly delivery of primary and secondary air filters for approximately 50 HVAC units throughout the district.

Board members discussed the replacement schedule, filter specifications, and maintenance procedures. Mark explained that quarterly replacements follow industry standards and manufacturer recommendations. He also noted that the district's Building Management System monitors filter conditions and alerts maintenance staff when additional replacements may be necessary. District personnel will perform all filter installations.

Board members also discussed the use of standardized filter specifications, including MERV 8 and MERV 13 ratings, and confirmed that the proposed cost covers all district buildings for the full year.

MOTION: Mr. Sapia motioned to approve entering into a contract with Filterbuy, Inc. for the replacement of HVAC filters for a total cost of $22,634.24. Seconded by Mr. O'Neil. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, O'Neil, Knutsen, Manthorn, Woodworth)

h. FY2028 CIP Recommendations

Mr. Brander presented the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects recommended by the CIP Committee following its September 15 meeting. The proposed projects total $1.8 million and include high school window replacements associated with the building envelope project, high school bathroom renovations ($500,000), replacement of Air Handler Unit No. 1 in the high school's 200 wing, additional athletic storage space ($600,000), and districtwide concrete masonry unit (CMU) wall repairs ($100,000).

Board members discussed the proposed bathroom renovations, with Mr. Brander explaining that the district plans to continue renovations in phases until all bathrooms have been addressed.

When asked if the CIP Committee had approved the proposed projects and funding amount, Mr. Sapia confirmed that the committee had reviewed and prioritized the requests, reducing a much larger list to projects considered most pressing. Projects costing less than $100,000 were

removed from the CIP proposal.

Discussion focused on the proposed $600,000 athletic storage facility. The proposed facility is a 50 by 50 by 14 ft. steel building. Mr. Brander explained that existing storage areas are overcrowded, with athletic equipment stored in trailers, concession areas, and other locations. Members discussed concerns regarding accessibility, student safety, and equipment deterioration resulting from inadequate storage. Board members expressed differing views regarding the cost and necessity of the storage facility. Some emphasized the long-standing storage concerns and increasing costs associated with delaying capital improvements, while others questioned whether less expensive alternatives or better utilization of existing storage areas could address the need.

Members also discussed potential funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. It was clarified that the grant operates on a reimbursement basis, requires upfront funding, and is not guaranteed.

Administration clarified that the Board's action would establish the proposed CIP amount to advance through the budget process, with the Budget Committee subsequently reviewing the funding request. Members also noted the importance of maintaining flexibility for unexpected facility repairs.

Following the vote, Board members requested that administration provide photographs documenting existing indoor and outdoor storage conditions, along with images of the proposed storage facility. Members also requested an assessment of existing storage areas to ensure available space is being used appropriately and unnecessary materials are removed.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to approve $1.8 million in proposed CIP projects for FY2028. Seconded by Mr. Sapia. Motion passed 5-1-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, Knutsen, Manthorn, Woodworth; No: O'Neil)

i. 2027 Legal Calendar

Superintendent Krieger presented the proposed 2027 Legal Calendar, highlighting new requirements under House Bill 564 regarding the preparation and approval of a separate School Administrative Unit (SAU) budget.

Mr. Krieger explained that single-district SAUs are now required to establish a separate budget for expenses necessary to operate the SAU. This budget will appear as an independent warrant article, separate from Article 2, the district's operating budget. The Board must conduct a public hearing and vote to adopt the SAU budget before January 1, 2027. Consequently, the hearing

must be scheduled in December rather than combined with the district's traditional January budget hearing. Only one public hearing is required for the district's four towns.

Mr. Krieger indicated that an initial SAU budget will be presented at the November 5 Board meeting. Expenses included in the SAU budget will be removed from the corresponding portions of the district's operating budget. Board members discussed which administrative positions, services, and building operating expenses should be included. Positions covered by collective bargaining agreements will remain outside the SAU budget.

It was asked what would occur if voters rejected the proposed SAU budget. Mr. Krieger explained that an adjusted budget, similar to but legally distinct from the district's default budget, would also be established and approved by the Board.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact of House Bill 1300, which contains a different definition of SAU expenses. The Superintendent acknowledged that the legislation could affect the budgeting process and emphasized the importance of developing a consistent, supportable SAU budget regardless of potential legislative changes.

It was noted that the Board has two scheduled meetings before the November 23 joint School Board and Budget Committee meeting, providing opportunities to review and discuss the proposed budget. Board members expressed a preference for scheduling the required public hearing in early December. The Board agreed to revisit the matter at its November 5 meeting.

j. Elementary Education Resources in Sandown

Superintendent Krieger presented a proposal to establish an advisory subcommittee under Policy BDF to explore Sandown's elementary education model and future needs.

The proposed membership includes School Board representatives from each of the district's four towns, board of selectmen, community members, Sandown parents, district administrators, and potentially representatives from local government, budget committees, and the student body. The outlined the potential involvement also includes district personnel with expertise in elementary education, facilities, finance, early childhood education, and special education.

Board members expressed support for establishing the subcommittee. A phased approach was recommended, beginning with a smaller group and expanding participation as needed. Mr. Krieger agreed that involving individuals at different stages would allow the committee to access relevant expertise while maintaining an efficient process.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to the formation of the Sandown Elementary Education Resources Subcommittee and its recommended membership as outlined in the executive summary dated October 15, 2026. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed 0-0-0. (Yes: Sapia, Kowalczyk, Knutsen, Manthorn, Woodworth, O'Neil)

k. Tax Cap Question on November 3rd

Superintendent Krieger presented an overview of House Bill 1300 and the proposed tax cap question appearing on the November 3, 2026, ballot. He noted that the Board previously studied a local tax cap proposal in October 2025 and that the resulting committee report remains available on the district website.

The proposed tax cap would limit annual property tax levy growth to the previous year's amount, adjusted for inflation and new construction, and restrict SAU central office expenditures to 6% of total district appropriations. Bonded capital costs would be excluded from both limits. Approval would require a three-fifths (60%) majority of voters across the district's four towns. If approved, the restrictions would remain in effect for two years, with the question returning to the ballot in 2028.

Concerns were expressed regarding the ballot language, particularly the statement that the caps would not affect classroom instruction or school-based services. Mr. Krieger clarified that the proposal limits the property tax levy rather than the overall budget. He explained that required expenditures, including special education and other fixed costs, could limit the district's flexibility and potentially result in reductions affecting classroom services. Members also discussed the fact that voters must accept or reject both proposed restrictions through a single ballot question.

Board members discussed the proposed tax cap, emphasizing the importance of historical budget trends, responsible spending, and the impact of property taxes on residents. Opinions differed regarding the need for spending limits and the potential long-term costs of delaying facility improvements and salary adjustments. Members also discussed providing ten years of financial data to help inform voters.

At the Board's request, Mrs. Watkins presented a preliminary analysis of how the proposed tax cap would have affected the FY 2027 budget. Using a 3% inflation adjustment and an assumed 1% increase for new construction, she estimated that the district would have needed to reduce its budget by approximately $13.75 million, resulting in an estimated budget of $78.3 million. This amount would have been approximately $4 million below actual FY 2026 expenditures.

Mrs. Watkins explained that the analysis was preliminary because the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration had not yet provided the necessary property growth data or final guidance regarding the calculation methodology. Members also discussed the appropriate inflation measure and the potential impact of the proposed restrictions on staffing, administrative services, and classroom operations.

Mr. Krieger emphasized that approximately 80% of the district's budget is personnel-related and cautioned that reductions of this magnitude could affect educational services. Members discussed administrative staffing levels, comparisons with other districts, and the need to balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining adequate educational resources.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Allaire reported that 35 educators from across the district attended a literacy conference in Concord, funded through the Title IIA federal grant. The conference included sessions focused on adolescent literacy, an identified district priority.

Mr. Krieger provided an update on information recently presented to the Budget Committee, including special education trends, contracted services, and employee compensation ranges under existing collective bargaining agreements. Additional analysis will be done. This information will be shared with the Board for further review.

He also presented the Board with metrics for the elementary, middle, and high school class sizes. There will be an opportunity for further discussion at a future meeting.

The Superintendent reported that meetings with the Boards of Selectmen in all four district towns have been scheduled, with two occurring in October and two during the first two Mondays in November. Board members were invited to attend.

PERSONNEL REPORT

No personnel report was presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Sapia reported on the recent Facilities Committee meeting, which focused primarily on the Timberlane Regional High School Envelope Project. The committee met with project representatives and the architect to review proposed costs, project components, and potential alternatives. Several questions regarding pricing and scope remain outstanding, and additional information has been requested. The committee discussed window replacements, exterior brick painting, and potential cost adjustments related to tariffs.

Mr. Sapia also reported that he and Mr. Woodworth had walked the high school and middle school campus to explore the feasibility of developing a cross-country trail. The proposed project could involve volunteer contributions and district maintenance personnel. Discussion included potential trail surfaces, property boundaries, rights-of-way, wetlands, and other site conditions requiring further evaluation.

Mr. Sapia further reported that seasonal maintenance and winter preparation of athletic fields are scheduled for late October through early November.

Approved

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Sapia expressed concerns regarding the financial impact of state-mandated special education requirements and proposed seeking additional state funding under RSA 28-A. Mr. Krieger reported identifying 101 New Hampshire-specific requirements beyond federal IDEA regulations.

Board members discussed the burden on local taxpayers and the possibility of coordinating advocacy with other districts. The Board agreed to revisit the matter at a future meeting.

There were no other delegates and individuals at this time.

MOTION: Chair Knutsen 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. Manthorn. Motion passed 6-0-0. (Yes: O'Neil, Kowalczyk, Manthorn, Knutsen, Woodworth, Sapia Not Present: Springer, LeCain, Sherwood)

Motion passed 6-0-0 to enter non-public at 9:07 PM.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to come out of non-public session. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed: 6-0-0 (Yes: O'Neil, Kowalczyk, Manthorn, Knutsen, Woodworth, Sapia Not Present: Springer, LeCain, Sherwood)

The Board returned to the public session at 9:45 PM.

MOTION: Mrs. Manthorn motioned to seal the non-public meeting minutes. Seconded by Mrs. Kowalczyk. Motion passed: 6-0-0 (Yes: O'Neil, Kowalczyk, Manthorn, Knutsen, Woodworth, Sapia Not Present: Springer, LeCain, Sherwood)

There was no further public business. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shari Allessio
Recording Secretary

Approved by the School Board on 11/5/26