

LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27**

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052

Approved Minutes for January 24, 2018

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair
Derek Barka, Board Member
John York, Board Member
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member
James L. O'Neill, Superintendent
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator
Scott Thompson, Principal, GMS
William Lonergan, Principal, CHS
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

(Agenda items may not be in the order in which they were addressed.)

I. PUBLIC SESSION

6:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Review & Revision of Agenda

There were no revisions to the agenda.

D. Summary of Non-Public Actions from January 10, 2018:

The non-public minutes were sealed by the Board.

E. Presentations and Recognitions

There were no presentations or recognitions.

F. Correspondence

Mrs. Harrison reported that there was no correspondence.

G. Moderator Review of Warrant Articles

Mr. Regan reviewed Deliberative Session procedures with the School Board. He asked the Board which member will speak to the articles.

Mr. Bourque indicated that he will speak to the articles.

Mr. Regan mentioned that he will communicate to the CHS principal regarding individuals who want to set up tables during the election events.

H. Superintendent's Comments

Mr. O'Neill commented that the weather has not cooperated during the first half of the year. He commended principals for their actions in responding to the delayed openings.

- History of Hip Hop Course Proposal

Mr. Lonergan and Mr. Ballou were present to answer any questions from School Board members regarding the proposed course. Mr. Ballou thanked the Board for allowing him to speak about the course. He explained the course tells the story of America through many lenses. He indicated that Hip Hop has been around for 40 years and has had a direct and diverse influence on its creators and audience.

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Mr. Ballou explained the course offers an exploration of the foundations, components, and effects hip hop has had on its neighborhoods, the US and the world. The proposal has been reformatted to be consistent with the course proposal template. He gave a background of his experience with Hip Hop. His involvement with Hip Hop began in 1994 during an eighth grade trip to Washington DC. He became interested in Hip Hop and its culture. Over the past year he has looked at modern and contemporary American culture and found there are very few contemporary American culture courses. He explored the resources and found there is a large contingency of colleges and universities looking at the culture from an economical and sociological standpoint, including the effects of the culture on the American society. He would like to bring appreciation of the generalized culture to the students looking at the poet, the songwriter, the deejay and what Hip Hop will do in the future to the American culture.

Mr. Barka asked Mr. Ballou to describe a Hip Hop class.

Mr. Ballou indicated he would be creating a class where the students are creating their own culture. He explained students would break up into groups working on the projects assigned. He noted the class would research music labels and utilize inquiry-based learning. He indicated that tangible product will be shared with classmates and the community. He commented the units will be approximately 2-3 weeks each with measurable competencies.

Mr. York asked to which class the course would be offered and what does a tangible project look like.

Mr. Ballou indicated that the course would be offered to Juniors and Seniors. He explained a tangible product could be a recording of a poem, a track or a documentary; a customization of the perspective of the culture of the topic they are studying. He commented they are actually involved in creating something in which they see value.

Mrs. MacDonald commented that Mr. Ballou presents engaging learning in his class. She was concerned about the profanity that is used in the culture.

Mr. Ballou commented that it is a slippery slope if we generalize the scope on the limited actions of a few artists. He agreed there are controversial topics and vulgarities with Hip Hop, but we have the ability to limit what is shown in class. He indicated this is more about the students creating their own music or research. Mr. Ballou noted that an educator in a classroom has responsibility to create a balance and that he does not intend to show any examples of vulgarities. He explained the goal is to walk a line where we can discuss the issues in a safe environment with legitimacy and explore the context of freedom of speech as opposed to explicit content. He commented exploring those things is important because it is history and it happened, at the same time respecting the subject.

Mr. York asked how long the course will run. Mr. Ballou commented the course will run as long as there are students that are interested and as long as there is an opportunity to continue offering the course. He indicated whether it is this course or another, we have the potential of offering things to motivate students to do the best they can do.

Mr. Bourque asked if students were surveyed for interest in the course. Mr. Ballou indicated that students were surveyed and there was an interest and misconception of what the class would be. He explained that Hip Hop is a culture and not just music. He noted it is clothing, institutions, non-profits; a culture movement. He referred to a journal of Hip Hop studies from Harvard and Cornell candidates that talks about Hip Hop as a cultural and era movement and offered to share the study with the Board. He mentioned there is a Hip Hop library at Harvard where you can comb through cd's of independent artists.

Mr. York asked how the course would fit in the ever-moving educational schedule at CHS and if this class would become a sixth period class or replace another elective.

Mr. Lonergan indicated that it is based on the sign ups and may widow out some of the electives that are not interesting to students.

Mr. Barka made a motion to approve the History of Hip Hop course as presented. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

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- Kindergarten Update

Mrs. Harrison reported that a team is working on the Full Day Kindergarten presentation and discussing how it will be presented to the voters as a benefit and how it impacts the tax rate. Mrs. Harrison indicated that Mr. Thompson provided a draft presentation that is planned to be used at an informal evening event on February 6 for parents of students entering kindergarten in 2018 or 2019. She noted a letter was sent inviting parents of Pre-K, Kindergarten and those who attend private pre-school. She noted the focus will be on half day/full day schedules, curriculum expectations for kindergarten, developmental considerations, and school readiness. Mrs. Harrison indicated the Business Administrator will be present at the event to answer any budget-related questions. Mr. Thompson also provided information regarding Kindergarten Registration, which includes the Kindergarten registration letter, a Session Choice form, and a Kindergarten Brochure. Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Clinton-Jones have put together a tentative full day schedule and a half day schedule.

Mrs. Harrison reported that Mr. Thompson called the NH DOE to ask if there is an updated list of districts with full day kindergarten and if it is necessary to offer specials to half day kindergarten students. She indicated there has been no return call at this time. She mentioned that Kindergarten registration has begun and an evening event was held last night with only five parents using the evening time, but so far 37 parents enrolled their children for Kindergarten next year, with 35 checking the option for full day program and 2 opting for half day. She commented it is evident there is interest for full day kindergarten in the town.

Mr. Bourque indicated that Mr. Thompson sent out a report regarding towns that offer free full day kindergarten that mentions 124 towns offer it and ten are considering offering it next year.

Mr. Barka commented in looking at the top districts, seven out of ten offer the program.

Mrs. Harrison commented that 87% of districts in New Hampshire offer full day kindergarten and nine are tuition programs.

Mr. Barka commented that the data persuades people. He indicated we have to commit to thee measurement ourselves and show them the data that reflects the program is beneficial.

Mrs. Harrison indicated the presentation is a work in progress. Mr. York requested periodic updates of the presentation.

Mr. Barka commented it is interesting in the research of the top districts that districts listed in those top rankings were ranked lower prior to implementing full day kindergarten. He indicated it would be interesting to see when the full day program was implemented in those districts.

Mr. O'Neill reported that Mr. Thompson notified him at this time last year 36 students registered for kindergarten and this year 47 are registered.

Mr. York commented we are a small town of homes and we rely on families moving into our community. He mentioned that real estate agents are asked that question when young families look to purchase homes.

Mrs. Harrison commented it is also important to remember the curriculum standards we teach our half day kindergarten students is the same that we teach our full time grade 1-12 students.

I. Community Forum

George Lambert, 3 Lydston Lane, commented that he attended the Selectmen's meeting on Monday night to ask them to commit in principle to approve the use of impact fees for the build-up of full day kindergarten if the School Board delivers a request that is reasonable. He indicated he pushed them several ways for the commitment. He stated if the school has more students coming in this year than last year, there is growth. He mentioned the legal opinions he received after his request at the budget hearing were the same opinions he received when he was a Selectman. Mr. Lambert commented the discussion then was about the state mandate and not whether there is a demand for kindergarten. He indicated the Selectmen need justification to ensure they are making the right decision.

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At that time the School Board never delivered the request. Mr. Lambert offered his assistance to review legal opinions and prepare the justification for the use of impact fees for full day kindergarten. He commented that expanding the kindergarten program is included in the Capital Improvement Plan. He indicated that the Selectmen had an opinion regarding impact fees provided by Bruce Mayberry in 2014. He mentioned he would like to help the Board move this forward and asked for a commitment from the School Board to request the use of impact fees for full day kindergarten. He asked for a consensus of the Board.

Mr. Bourque explained that the Board and district are in the process of pursuing impact fees. He indicated that legal counsel has provided different opinions than what Mr. Lambert has presented. He noted that originally the district planned to lease the structure, but were advised that impact fees cannot be used for a lease.

Mr. York commented it is not the School Board's decision to decide if we can use the fees. He indicated it is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to make that decision. He noted whether legal counsel advises that the funds can or cannot be used for that purpose does not put pressure on the town to say yes. He mentioned that this was the discussion five years ago and the reason why the Board did not request the funds. Mr. York noted if the Board of Selectmen approved the purchase of the existing kindergarten portable after the lease expired, they should approve the use of the funds now.

Mr. Lambert commented when he was on the Board of Selectmen he wanted to eliminate impact fees because they are not used.

Mr. Bourque indicated that the use of impact fees is contingent on increased enrollment as a result of residential development. Mr. Lambert indicated that the fees are calculated for every bedroom the impact has on municipal and school services.

Mr. Bourque asked how the district can use the fees with no evidence of increased new enrollment from new development. Mr. Lambert stated the Board has to request them. He indicated that we need to look at the impact fees and Capital Improvement Plan and determine how the fees can be used to decrease taxation. He commented all the Board has to do is make the request. He indicated if the district's legal counsel is not providing a legal opinion that is consistent with what others have, then get another attorney. He asked the Board if the information he provided was helpful.

Mr. Bourque indicated it was somewhat useful, but the Board is already in the process of making a request. Mr. Lambert commented that the Board should send the letter and see what happens. He indicated he would like the School Board and Board of Selectmen to be able to say that they decreased taxes.

Mr. O'Neill indicated he would like the Board to direct the Superintendent to draft a letter requesting the use of up to \$223,205 in elementary impact fees. He commented that the request can be delivered to the Town and a meeting can be requested to consider the request. He noted if the Board of Selectmen is in favor they will consult their legal counsel who will review the purpose and legality and then they would respond. Mr. O'Neill does not believe that the impact fees can be used because it has to be specifically utilized for new construction that generates new students for the district.

Mr. Lambert commented that we are looking at increasing enrollment in kindergarten this year. Mr. O'Neill indicated that he will not commit to saying that at this time. He commented we can look at the cohort of students born five years ago and project how many students we could have and provide that information to the Town.

Mr. Bourque directed the Superintendent to draft and deliver a letter for the use of impact fees.

J. School Board Comments

Mr. Bourque reminded residents there are many positions open between the School Board and Budget Committee. He noted there are 2 three year positions and 1 two year position open for the School Board. He mentioned there are several positions open for the town. If interested, signups are at town hall.

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Mr. Bourque reported a small committee has begun to vet the Superintendent candidates. He indicated they are talking to Superintendents, parents, teachers, and school board members about the candidates we have for Superintendent.

Mr. O'Neill added that he and Mrs. Messenger have been making calls to individuals that the committee was not able to speak with. Mrs. Messenger will report that information to the Board.

Mr. Bourque asked about the schedule for February 1. Mr. O'Neill indicated the candidates will visit each school on February 1, meet with the SAU staff in the morning, school staff in the afternoon, and then with the Board prior to the Community Meet and Greet. The candidates will meet with the community from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm and the Board will reconvene at 7:30 pm to gather information in non-public session and decide what direction the Board wants to take. He suggested the Board meet with community members at the event for some feedback.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Public Minutes:

- January 10, 2018

Mr. York made a motion to approve the public minutes of January 10, 2018. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. York asked that the Business Administrator provide the financial report on the Friday prior to the meeting. Mr. Izbicki indicated he provides current information to the Board by providing the report on the day of the meeting.

Mr. Bourque asked Mr. Izbicki to provide an update on the day of the meeting, but provide the financial report on the Friday prior to the meeting.

B. Budget Transfers

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the budget transfers from November 2017 to January 24, 2018. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

III. REPORTS

A. Business Administrator's Report

- Finance Report

The Business Administrator provided an updated financial report to the School Board. He reported the Title IV grant for robotics is in its final approval and the schools are looking for the money for which they were approved; we will be looking at bus routes in April; March 13 is the date for the district-wide ALICE training.

Mr. Bourque requested an overlay of the bus routes on a map. Mr. Izbicki indicated he will request it.

- Budget Update

The Business Administrator provided an update regarding the FY19 budget.

- Warrant Articles

The Warrant Articles were signed by the School Board.

- 2017 Audit

The Business Administrator reviewed the auditor's findings for the 2017 Audit with the School Board. He reported that there were some findings on the student activity funds and he will address the internal control findings. He noted the final audit came in a bit below what we budgeted last year and about two months earlier due to those involved in the preparation.

B. Enrollment Report Dec 2017

The Superintendent reviewed the enrollment report with the Board. He indicated that there has been no change.

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Mr. O'Neill commented that ALICE training is important training for the employees. He thanked Mr. Izbicki and Mr. Lecklider for working on it.

C. Committee Reports

With reference to the Capital Planning Committee, Mr. York commented that he would like the list of identified items categorized into the three designations for the School Board so the Board can provide guidance on whether or not they would like to go to bond for the major repairs to the school buildings/systems.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policies:

- IKF High School Graduation Requirements

Due to the change made in the 2018-2019 CHS Program of Studies recently approved by the School Board, a revision was required to be made to the math and elective credits in the policy in order to align.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the amendments to Policy IKF, High School Graduation Requirements. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

B. Job Descriptions:

- Reading Tutor, Math Tutor, Title I Tutor, Enrichment Tutor

The Superintendent presented tutor job descriptions to the School Board. The Board requested time to review the job descriptions and asked that they be brought back to the Board on February 7.

V. MANIFEST

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

A. Community Forum

There was no public input.

VII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3II (a-c)

[Minutes of Non-Public Session are written under separate cover.]

Upon a motion by Mrs. Harrison, the Board entered non-public session AT 7:30 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3II (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee. (c) Matters, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.

VIII. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Upon a motion by Mr. York, the Board returned to public session at 8:05 p.m. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.

IX. ADJOURN

Mr. York made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board