

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 9, 2019

Held at Campbell High School

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair
Robert G. Meyers, III, Board Member
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member
Tara Hershberger, Board Member
Dr. Michael Jette, Ph.D., Superintendent
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator
Mary Widman, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Scott Thompson, Principal, GMS
Tom Lecklider, Principal, LMS
William Lonergan, Principal CHS
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

I. PUBLIC SESSION

6:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:20 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 December 19, 2018:

Mr. Meyers made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of December 5, 2018. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

E. School Board Discussion and Open Forum

- School Board Discussion with State Representatives

Mr. Bourque welcomed State Representatives Ralph Boehm, Richard Lascellas, Mark MacLean and Mark Proulx to the Board meeting.

Mr. Bourque explained that School Board members will discuss topics including education funding, the declining stabilization grant, building aid, SB 193, and the increasing burden of local taxation placed on Litchfield as a result of the loss of revenues due to the decisions made by the Legislature to down shift funding responsibilities to local school districts and municipalities. He indicated approximately 80% of our budget is salaries and benefits and the funding from the State is decreasing.

Mr. Izbicki commented if we level funded the budget it would still result in a tax increase of \$0.24 on the tax rate.

Mr. Boehm commented that the Representatives are aware of what is occurring in the State. He indicated that school districts do not have to worry about SB 193 (School Choice) because it will not affect public school funding. He noted that the statements made regarding loss of funding to public schools was based on bad information. He pointed out that the Supreme Court would deem unconstitutional any public school funding that is given to private schools.

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Mr. Bourque indicated that he is aware there has been no legislative action on the bill, but the ramifications are felt in different school districts. He commented the State wants districts to pay for students who want to go to school in a different town. He cited the recent example of a Manifest Educational Hardship case in Litchfield where the State Board of Education ordered the district to pay the tuition for two years for a student who had never attended schools in Litchfield, but whose now resides in Litchfield, to continue to attend Pinkerton Academy.

Mr. Boehm commented that the decision is made in the best interest of the child. He indicated there were similar issues when he was a member of the School Board and the Board at that time did what was in the best interest of the child. He believes a student should be able to finish where they started.

Mr. Boehm commented that funding is based on the number of students. In 2007 there was no representation from Litchfield in the Legislature. He indicated that Litchfield was slated to lose \$2M in education funding in 2011 and the Stabilization grant was passed so that school districts slated for a decrease in funding would not lose that money. There is another bill in the Legislature to recalculate the formula, but Mr. Boehm refused to support it because he feels it will not work. He explained that although Litchfield does not stand to lose or gain any funding, he does not support funding that awards funding to districts who do not perform well. He indicated that districts with a high percentage of free/reduced lunch are awarded more funds. Mr. Boehm commented changing the funding formula takes a long time. He noted the State uses median household income, which is not fair for Litchfield.

Mrs. Hershberger asked if commercial base is calculated into the rate.

Mr. Boehm indicated he would like to see that as well. He commented that there are no more donor towns and the state education tax stays with the town. He noted there has been a decrease in school population across the state. He believes that the State Trust Fund should be awarded using a census-based method.

Mr. Lascelles complimented the Board for investigating any source of funding. He noted there are things at the state level that have to be watched. He indicated the whole idea with respect to property poor towns should be some sort of equalization and he does not believe that is currently working. Mr. Lascelles is a fan of local taxation and commented whenever the state gets involved there is always a struggle or crisis with the political climate. He indicated it is a better method to use a budgeting process with the Budget Committee and Town Meeting where people can go to sessions and see where their money is going. He commented when money is sent to the State there is always a struggle to get any of it back. He pledged to make sure Litchfield has a voice when formula issues are raised and that Litchfield gets its fair share.

Mr. Boehm commented there are state and federal mandates and he will always fight against them. He indicated that we do not need the state or federal government telling us how to teach our children.

Mr. McLean believes local control is better. He indicated that it is unfortunate with recent Supreme Court decisions you do not have full local control. He commented that the state funding formula does have an impact of rewarding badly performing districts. Mr. McLean indicated Legislators have to go back and look at the details of the funding formula and try to make it beneficial and equitable.

Mr. Proulx echoed Mr. McLean's sentiments and pledged to look at that formula more closely.

Mr. Bourque asked how stabilization will work when it has been phased out.

Mr. Boehm indicated that everything will be left as it is with no loss or gain. He commented he would like to see the per pupil amount increase since the school population in the whole state is decreasing.

Mr. McLean commented the adequacy portion was going to be equal across the state, but stabilization was the buffer and it allowed certain towns to lose and some to gain.

Mr. Boehm commented one of the problems in 2011 was that Bedford was getting more money and Litchfield was losing money. He believes that Bedford should have been a donor town based on its size and commercial base.

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Mr. Bourque commented they are looking at the current trend, funding from the state and the tax impact on the town.

Mr. Boehm commented that State only has a certain amount of money. He indicated that there are some bills coming forward proposing a state sales tax and state income tax.

Mr. Lascelles commented if you are looking to the state for tax relief you have to think about the overall priority within the state. The tax structure now is a finite amount of money at the state level. Some tough choices have to be made when it comes to priorities. Politicians have said yes for too long to everything that comes along. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who got us out of the depression, set up a social welfare system and not a supporter of unions. Mr. Lascelles indicated we are in a situation where New Hampshire does not become the “new Massachusetts” and we are conscious of that. He commended the Board for getting the representation together to find out what is going on at the state level, but have to be very cognizant of those formulas because for a while we did not have representation and lost out on funding.

Mr. Boehm suggested having the Representatives back in June to provide an update on the laws.

Mr. Proulx commented what this Legislature accomplishes this year another will undo in two years. He indicated it is difficult to tell other Legislators what they can or cannot do. He noted to plan on money coming forward by a certain date is very hard to predict.

Mr. Lascelles commented people are spending money on Keno.

Mr. Boehm mentioned there is a bill do eliminate Keno revenue for Kindergarten.

Mr. Bourque asked if the profits from Keno go to the education fund. Mr. Boehm indicated the profits go to fund full day kindergarten.

Mrs. Harrison commented that Litchfield still needs a new school, but without reinstating building aid that may not happen.

Mr. Boehm indicated building aid came out of the budget, but someone thought it would be a good idea to bond that money. He noted the State is now stuck with paying off the bond. He commented building aid was established because the State was growing significantly and they helped pay for the schools.

Mrs. Harrison commented our buildings are aging and a new building would be on the backs of our taxpayers.

Mr. McLean commented there is an ongoing drug crisis in the state and many things that have been on the ‘back burner’ are now getting attention.

Mr. Proulx commented that the state is not growing and many people are leaving.

Mr. Lascelles commented if you have something at one point that does not mean it will always be there.

Mr. Proulx indicated there are so many other needs in the state. He noted that he was surprised to see what the state is responsible for and there are many different populations that are requiring more care.

Mr. Boehm indicated it is better to eliminate the middle management and not the people doing the work.

Mr. Lascelles indicated that Litchfield is not alone. He noted Berlin is closing their schools. He commented we all want to keep Litchfield the best it can be.

Mr. Proulx commented that Litchfield now has four voices.

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Mr. Bourque commented that he is pleased Litchfield has the voices at the state level and looks forward to the Representatives returning in June.

Mr. Lascelles observed that local young people are moving into NH. He indicated NH has the most aged population in the country and we need more young people to settle here.

Mrs. Hershberger asked if there are any innovative way schools are generating revenue.

Mr. Boehm indicated that Litchfield is generating revenue through sponsors.

Mr. Lascelles commented there are a limited number of businesses in Litchfield and whenever a school group is looking for sponsorship they approach these businesses. He indicated he would like to see the schools patronize businesses or products.

Mr. Bourque agreed with Mr. Lascelles and indicated that local businesses have been beyond generous.

- Community Forum

Mr. Bourque opened the floor to questions from the audience. Hearing none, Mr. Bourque thanked the State Representatives for their time attending the meeting and speaking with the Board.

F. Presentations and Recognitions

There were no presentations or recognitions.

G. Correspondence

Mrs. Harrison reported correspondence was received from Keri Douglas, 9 Pheasant Street, regarding the declining revenue from the state and other sources, as well as comments regarding New Hampshire Retirement System.

H. Superintendent's Comments

- Follow Up to School Board Inquiries
 - NHSBA Delegate Assembly Reminder

Dr. Jette reminded School Board members that a representative is required to attend the NHSBA Delegates Assembly to introduce the proposed resolution from the floor of the assembly.

Mrs. Harrison volunteered to attend the January 26 NHSBA Delegate Assembly and bring forward the resolution from the School Board.

- Special Education Conference Reminder

Dr. Jette reminded School Board members about the upcoming special education conference that includes a session on Building Resilient Communities. Board members were extended an invitation to attend the session.

Mrs. MacDonald offered to attend the Special Education Conference.

- 2019 Warrant

Dr. Jette asked Board members if they would like to add to or revise any warrant articles. He indicated the warrant will be reviewed by the DRA and final language will be provided for the Board on January 23 for the Board's signatures.

Article 1: Operating Budget

Mr. Bourque asked about the transportation contract cost. Mr. Izbicki indicated that we can adjust or amend the article at Deliberative Session.

No changes were made to Article 1.

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Article 2: LEA Contract

No changes were made to Article 2.

Article 3: Enrichment Tutor LMS

No changes were made to Article 3.

Article 4: Math Tutor LMS

No changes were made to Article 4.

Article 5: Expendable Trust

Dr. Jette asked the Board if they would like to keep this article on the warrant as the Budget Committee questioned the necessity.

Mr. Bourque indicated the Budget Committee said if this amount were added to the Capital Reserve Fund article they would support it.

Mr. Meyers made a motion to remove Article 5, creation of an Expendable Trust Fund for teacher hiring. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Article 6: Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund

Dr. Jette indicated Article 6 will become Article 5.

Mr. Meyers made a motion to revise the article to ask to appropriate \$100,000 to be added to the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

○ FY20 Default Budget

Dr. Jette provided the FY20 Default Budget to the School Board for review.

Mr. Izbicki indicated that included in the default budget are salaries and benefits costs from October 2018; the transportation contract is not included because we do not have a contract; transportation is level funded; operational lines are level funded. He mentioned that there is a possibility that when the transportation contract is finalized it could lower the proposed budget.

○ Enrollment Update

Dr. Jette provided the enrollment update for the School Board. He reported current enrollment as of January 8, 2019 reflects an increase of 7 students since December 22, 2018, for a total of 1,314 students. He noted that Kindergarten classrooms are tight with the increased enrollment.

Mr. Thompson mentioned he met with the teachers with regard to kindergarten class size. He noted pre-k class size is limited to 15 students and consists of up to 50% special education students. He indicated that although the current policy for kindergarten is 20 with a paraprofessional, it is a challenge as the kindergarten class sizes increase, but they are managing.

○ CHS Recycling

Dr. Jette provided information regarding a School Board request regarding CHS recycling of cafeteria materials. He indicated much recycle material is being thrown away in the cafeteria and the recycling program is largely student volunteer-based. He observed it would be challenging to keep up with the large amount of recycling from the lunches.

Mr. Lonergan commented that recycle bins can be set up; however, other drink holder often get mixed in and it becomes messy. He indicated the recycle program cannot support the cafeteria daily with three lunch periods.

Mr. Bourque suggested using the students that run the store to help. Mr. Lonergan indicated that recycling would have to be incorporated into that course.

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o Union Leader Article

Dr. Jette mentioned there was an article in the Union Leader yesterday that reported the State has \$10M in federal funds they are not able to spend, which has been accumulating because district are not spending the funds. He noted that there is a chart included in the article that shows how much each district did not spend according to the State. Dr. Jette indicated the chart is misleading. He provided to the Board actual allocations, budgeted, approved and paid back to us from the State and the current balance for our district. He indicated that Litchfield spent every penny. Dr. Jette reported that there is a balance of \$13,000 for the 2017-18 grant, but it is a 27 month grant so we have until September 2019 to spend the money. He commented the grant is monitored very closely.

I. School Board Comments

Mrs. MacDonald asked why we cannot approve naming the CHS auditorium now because the proposal was brought forward before we had a policy.

Mr. Bourque indicated that if the proposal is approved, the Board will be bringing forth a policy that will have no meaning because we are bypassing a process we have worked very hard to establish.

Mrs. MacDonald made a motion to name the CHS Auditorium in honor of Phil Martin. Mrs. Harrison seconded.

Mrs. MacDonald indicated the proposal was brought to us before we had a policy.

Mr. Bourque indicated that others were proposed to the Board we did not name anything. He explained when we received this proposal we believed we needed to put a policy in place due to the number of proposals we had received.

Mrs. Hershberger commented in absence of a policy we were basing decisions on precedent and not naming anything.

Mrs. MacDonald indicated many people have contacted her regarding the proposal.

Mr. Bourque commented that we felt as a Board if something is that important it will stand the test of time and that the public should have input. He indicated we are developing a policy to give us some guidance and direction.

Mrs. Harrison agreed that the Board should vote. She commented the proposal has gone through most of the process. She indicated Mr. Lonergan and Mr. Perez feel they do not need to go through that process again and they will have to wait that final year.

Mr. Bourque asked what is being lost by waiting. He commented if students are concerned that people will forget Mr. Martin, why name the auditorium after him. He indicated a policy is needed to ensure the right decision is made.

Mrs. Hershberger indicated if the policy is approved tonight we can make a motion to place the request on the warrant.

Mr. Bourque believes that the Board would be bypassing policy parameters if an exception for this request is made.

Mrs. MacDonald amended the original motion to draft an article for the 2019 warrant requesting voter approval to name the CHS Auditorium in honor of Phil Martin. Mrs. Harrison seconded.

Mrs. Harrison agreed with the proposal as many in the public supported it. Mrs. Hershberger agreed.

Mr. Bourque commented that the Board wanted a policy and process to ensure we are doing the right thing and now the Board is jumping past the process we worked on for several months.

The motion carried 3-2-0, with Mr. Bourque and Mr. Meyers opposing.

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Mr. Bourque observed the Board is not going through the process and is taking action based on emotional outcry.

Mr. Meyers commented the numbers were not different from the proposal to name the CHS Library after Dr. Ange and a different direction was sought.

II. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Public Minutes:

- December 19, 2018

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the public minutes of December 19, 2018. Mr. Meyers seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

III. REPORTS

A. Curriculum Report

Ms. Widman provided the curriculum report for the School Board. She reported that Bill Atwood spent the day on December 5 in the district and was met with great energy and positivity. She noted teachers walked away with new ideas, as well as an energy and commitment to bring their learning into their classes.

Ms. Widman reported all schools have put out their parent notification letters with regard to state testing.

B. Principals' Reports

Principals provided their reports for the School Board. Principals discussed the impact of the reduction of State Aid in their buildings.

- GMS

Mr. Thompson reported that third and fourth grade teachers are learning about the NHSAS Interim and Benchmark Assessments, which gives students a chance to use the state platform in a low stakes environment and gives teachers feedback about what they are teaching. He explained the interim assessments can be take an unlimited number of times and allow teachers to gather evidence of student learning to inform instruction. Benchmark assessments are more specific in content area and can be used as pre-tests or post-tests for a unit of instruction. Mr. Thompson noted that we will not be doing all of the AIMSweb assessments.

Mr. Thompson spoke about Bill Atwood's visit. The day began with a two hour overview in the morning that involved classroom teachers, special education teachers, specialist teachers and paraprofessionals. The entire faculty was debriefed and engaged, involved and having fun. It was exciting to bring the strategies into the school and to see Mr. Atwood's demo working with the students who were really engaged. After he worked with the students, they were excited to get in front of the class and lead the class using his strategies, including students with disabilities.

- LMS

Mr. Lecklider reported that LMS held its Geography Bee this week and Brian McKinnon is the winner who will go on to compete at the state level. He commended the generosity of the community for their assistance during the holiday season. He indicated the Giving Tree was a successful event.

Mr. Lecklider spoke about the State Assessments. He indicated he was excited about the format of the interim assessment. He commented the test can be given in the classroom with 1:1 technology and instant results. He noted accommodations are embedded. Mr. Lecklider indicated that it creates a natural flow in the classroom. Mr. Lecklider spoke about Newsela and provided an example for the Board. He explained there are four to five reading levels per article and a writing prompt, which looks for evidence to justify answers or responses. He indicated that the reading is based on current events.

- CHS

Mr. Lonergan reported CHS has experienced incredible generosity around the holidays by the community; PSAT scores went out to parents and the data team is looking at that information; CHS will take the Youth Risk Behavior Survey this year; CHS has been reaccredited by NEASC; a Career Breakfast is planned for March so students can

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meet with community members to discuss career opportunities and requirements for those who may opt to go directly into a career after graduation; CHS is doing a work study on competency recovery and summer school.

- Learning Commons News

Mr. Lonergan provided a link to the CHS Learning Common new page.

- Sophomore Project and Senior Project

Mr. Lonergan prepared presentations regarding sophomore and senior projects for the Board.

Mr. Bourque indicated he requested a list of current projects, the sponsors, the advisor/teacher and the dates of the project and presentations. He noted the Board would like to see what projects the students are doing.

Mr. Lonergan provided a list of the 2018-2019 projects with advisor names. Mr. Bourque indicated the Board is looking for the sponsors of the projects and a more in depth description of the projects.

Mrs. Harrison commented the students need to do their hours in their topics and write a paper. Mr. Lonergan clarified sophomores present to the class, whereas senior projects are presented to the public. He indicated there needs to be rigor added to the senior project and the administration is looking into it.

Dr. Jette suggested the Board commit some time in the summer to discuss improvement of the senior project.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2019-2020 CHS Program of Studies

The 2019-2020 CHS Program of Studies and changes to the program were presented to the School Board.

Mr. Lonergan reviewed the changes in the 2019-2020 Program of Studies. He explained Senior English was removed as a graduation requirement, and instead, seniors will take either AP English or Honors Senior English.

The Board suggested a minor revision.

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 CHS Program of Studies with the suggested revision. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

V. OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Policies:

- FF, Naming of Facilities

Mrs. Harrison suggested changing the waiting period for proposals for naming a facility from 3 years to 2 years.

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to change the waiting period for proposals for naming a facility from 3 years to 2 years. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-2-0, with Mr. Bourque and Mr. Meyers opposing.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve Policy FF, Naming of Facilities as amended. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

VI. MANIFEST

The manifest was circulated and signed by the School Board.

VII. PUBLIC INPUT

A. Community Forum

There was no public input.

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

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

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Upon a motion made by Mr. Bourque, the School Board entered into non-public session at 9:15 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. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. Meyers, yes; Mrs. Hershberger, yes.

IX. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Hershberger, the School Board returned to public session at 10:00 p.m. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. Meyers, yes; Mrs. Hershberger, yes.

X. ADJOURN

Mrs. Hershberger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board