

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 December 20, 2017

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair (*excused*)
Derek Barka, Board Member
John York, Board Member
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member
James L. O'Neill, Superintendent
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

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

I. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3II (c) 6:00 p.m.

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

Mr. Bourque made a motion to enter into non-public session at 6:00 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; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.

II. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bourque, the School Board returned to public session at 6:42 p.m. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mr. Barka, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. York, yes.

III. PUBLIC SESSION

A. Call to Order

Mr. Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Review & Revision of Agenda

Revisions to the agenda included the postponement of Tutors Job Descriptions, under New Business, to January 10, 2018, and postponement of Policy JRD to January 10, 2018.

D. Summary of Non-Public Actions from December 6, 2017: *There was no non-public session.*

E. Presentations and Recognitions

There were no presentations or recognitions.

F. Correspondence

Mr. Bourque mentioned that the Board received correspondence from Chris Pascucci, 12 Colonial Drive, and copied the Budget Committee. He noted the Budget Committee Chair touched on that letter at their December 14 meeting. He indicated that it is interesting to note that if Mr. Pascucci watched and listened to the Board meeting on the evening he mentioned, he would have heard that the Board decided to put full day kindergarten on the warrant and present that to the Budget Committee.

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Mr. Bourque commented that Mr. Pascucci made inaccurate statements in his letter and incorrectly referenced that the Board intends to rally groups for Deliberative Session. He indicated the Budget Committee Chair stated she found nothing out of line with the School Board meeting on December 6 and that she has always encouraged the public to attend Deliberative Session as it is the one chance for the public to express their voice. Mr. Bourque mentioned that Mr. Pascucci stated the Board is trying to manipulate the process, which is not the situation. He indicated the Board encourages the public to attend Deliberative Session because it is their opportunity to be heard and it is their budget to change.

Mr. Bourque publicly encouraged citizens to attend Deliberative Session in February and asked Mrs. Harrison to post the announcement on Facebook.

G. Superintendent's Comments

Mr. O'Neill reported that he was notified by Mr. Thompson that a grant written by Ms. Sibona and Ms. Starret for Lego Robotics was approved by the State. He thanked the corporate sponsor, New England Small Tube, for their support. He noted that this will lead into the following year when we will work to include stipend positions for this activity.

Mr. York made a motion to accept the State grant for GMS for Lego Robotics. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Co-Curricular Positions

Mr. O'Neill commented he had communication with the LEA for job descriptions and stipends to bring those positions to the Board in the future. He indicated when the Budget Committee made the motion to reduce co-curricular positions by \$37,000 for FY19, he asked them to leave \$7,000-\$8,000 in that budget for stipend positions that would be introduced for next year. Mr. O'Neill noted they complied and that money is in the FY19 budget.

Kindergarten Warrant Article

Mr. O'Neill reported that the district asked legal counsel for interpretation of the 2005 Kindergarten warrant. He asked Board members to review it and have a discussion when they are ready.

Mr. Bourque suggested that the Board can discuss the legal opinion at the next meeting. He commented that implementation of full day kindergarten by warrant article will lower the default budget. He indicated that the 2005 warrant article allowed the Board to implement full day kindergarten without a warrant article. He noted the Board will have a discussion at the next meeting.

- Student Representatives to the School Board

The Board Chair introduced the two appointed student representatives to the School Board to the Board: Trevor Gomes and Sarah Stagnone.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that Ms. Stagnone has been accepted into the National Honor Society, several schools and may be interested in Occupational Therapy. He mentioned that Mr. Gomes is involved in Cross Country, a member of the CHS Student Council, was accepted in the National Honor Society, has been accepted at several schools and is interested in chemical engineering. Mr. O'Neill asked them to explain how they happened to become School Board Student Representatives.

Ms. Stagnone indicated that no one ran for the positions during the election. She mentioned she and Mr. Gomes are both on the Student Council and met with the other officers. She noted the officers asked them if they would consider being the student representatives.

Mr. O'Neill commented that it is sometimes difficult to interest people to get into politics.

H. Community Forum

There was no public input.

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I. School Board Comments

There were no Board member comments.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Public Minutes:

- December 6, 2017

Mr. York made a motion to approve the public minutes of December 6, 2017. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1, with Mr. Barka abstaining.

V. OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. PSAT/SAT Prep Course Proposal

The PSAT/SAT Prep course proposal has been revised and more information provided for the School Board. The School Board is required to approve the course for submission into the CHS Program of Studies. The course is a workshop-style, writing and math experience for students as they prepare for either post-secondary school or the workplace. It is a one semester course (every other day) that will be capped at 30 students and will run each semester. Juniors have first priority, then sophomores, then freshmen. It is possible to run an after school section if necessary.

Mr. Bourque commented 60 students paid for the course last year and believes that there will just as many that will want to take the course for free.

Dr. Childress indicated that a stipend will be paid through a grant and the after school course will be free as well.

Mr. Bourque asked the student representatives if they attended the course last year.

Ms. Stagnone indicated that she took the prep course and teachers gave Math and English practice tests, showing us how to go through the questions in ELA and Math.

Mrs. MacDonald asked if it helped. Ms. Stagnone indicated it helped to be prepared as to what was going to be on the test.

Mr. Bourque commented he sees this as a benefit to students, but not as a credited course.

Mr. Barka commented that the SAT is our assessment and would not want this to be a course.

Dr. Childress indicated the students can get a math credit for the course. Mrs. MacDonald commented most of those students will go through Algebra II anyway.

Mr. Gomes believes the credit is a benefit and indicated he would have taken the course if it were free.

Ms. Stagnone indicated the sign up for students wanting to pay for the course was full and she believes more will want to take it if it is free.

Mr. York commented that students taking the after school course will have to juggle activities or work and those who elect to take the course during the school day will have to decide what courses they can take.

Mr. O'Neill suggested having the high school principal here during the discussion may make a difference. He believes it is a valuable course and should be offered, but is not sure that it has enough definition to make it a half-credit course.

Mr. Bourque commented the discussion will be held over to the next meeting. He is concerned with how fast the course will fill up. He indicated it is a fabulous course and should be offered, but does not believe that credit for the course should be given.

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Mr. O'Neill commented when parents find out we are offering this course they will direct their children to take the course if they are college bound.

- B. List of Qualifying High School and CTE Math Courses

A revised list of math embedded courses has been prepared and provided for the School Board. The School Board is required to approve the courses that will count toward math credit for high school graduation.

Dr. Childress indicated that the focus was on courses that can be taken in the senior year. She noted there are 19 courses that are math embedded and CTE classes at Alvirne and Pinkerton.

Mr. York suggested removing Web Design and Advanced Web Design as they are not math embedded.

Mr. O'Neill commented these courses are more geared for non-college bound students.

Mr. York made a motion to approve the revised list of math embedded courses for inclusion in the CHS Program of Studies. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

VI. REPORTS

A. Business Administrator's Report

Mr. Izbicki provided a financial update to the Board as well as an update for the FY19 budget.

Mr. York commented the Budget Committee has been unable to get their nine members together for voting on the budgets and warrant articles. He indicated it is very disappointing that a member used our past numbers against us and the Chair allowed it to occur. He noted the town approved kindergarten and this group of people keep forcing us to go to the well for another vote. Mr. York commented in 2011, the Budget Committee was hijacked by a group of people that make it difficult for the Board. He was concerned about the Budget Committee's conflict with kindergarten when the people have voted to support kindergarten not only on the warrant, but in the budget. He noted the School Board needs to be unified on this issue.

- 2019 Warrant Articles Recommendations

Mr. Izbicki provided to the Board the FY19 Warrant Articles that include the recommendations of the Budget Committee. He noted that legal counsel has provided recommendations and minor language revisions and the School Board is required to provide their recommendations as well.

Article 1: Operating Budget \$22,342,614

Mr. Barka made a motion to recommend Article 1. Mr. York seconded. The motion failed 0-4-0.

Article 1 is not recommended by the School Board.

Article 2: Full Day Kindergarten \$519,732

Mr. York made a motion to recommend Article 2. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Article 2 is recommended by the School Board.

Article 3: Special Education Coordinator \$93,313

Mrs. MacDonald was concerned that the district may not need the position. Mr. O'Neill disagreed. He explained that the district is seeing more complicated cases and has a significant caseload. He indicated that the Special Services is understaffed and the director is spread thin. He commented this position will take work off the teachers and case managers.

Mrs. MacDonald commented she would like to see more oversight over the paraprofessionals.

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Mr. York made a motion to recommend Article 3. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Article 3 is recommended by the School Board.

Article 4: Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund \$50,000

Mr. O'Neill commented the Capital Planning Committee reviewed the entire list of work in the building assessment and removed a significant amount to maintenance. He indicated the Budget Committee felt having additional money in that fund would be beneficial to address some issues in the Capital Plan. Mr. O'Neill commented during the budgeting session we removed \$200,000 of transition money and \$150,000 of the Budget Committee's recommended budget, which amounts to \$350,000 that would have shown up as fund balance in the past. He indicated with the budgets getting tighter, there is no guarantee in the future that there will be money to put into this fund.

Mr. York made a motion to recommend Article 4. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Article 4 is recommended by the School Board.

B. Committee Reports

- Budget Committee

The Budget Committee met on December 14 and discussed the FY19 School District budget and warrant articles.

Mr. Bourque commented that the next meeting is January 4, 2018 when a presentation by the town regarding the new fire station will be provided. He indicated that the town is saying there will be no tax impact on the warrant article for the fire station for 2018, but there will be a significant tax impact the following year, which the town has yet to explain.

Mr. York commented that the town is not doing anything that hasn't been done for many years. He indicated the system is set up for the town to have a contingency of whatever the percentage is and if they exceed that they have to return it to the voters. He noted they have learned that there is a way for certain warrant articles to be approved without spending. He added there is well over \$1M in their contingency fund.

Mr. Bourque commented there will be several members of public there to ask them questions. He noted the town's budget increased 22% in five years and the district's budget increase was much less.

Mr. O'Neill commented he is puzzled that the 2.5% is on the net amount after deducting revenues. He indicated if revenues increase it comes off the gross and does not count toward the cap. He noted that the town is in the position where they can have increased revenues and add to their budget staying within that 2.5%. Mr. O'Neill commented the district's loss this year was due to the ADM reduction. He added we have to look at revenues seriously.

Mr. Bourque commented that he would like to see the Budget Committee look at the district the way they look at the town. He mentioned that during discussion of the kindergarten warrant article, a certain Budget Committee member's concern was people teaching in private local kindergartens may lose their jobs. He indicated the fact is that teachers will lose their jobs in the district next year. Mr. Bourque noted the Chair made a point that working to get the additional state aid is good business and if we charge a fee we lose state aid.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the other strong argument is if you deem kindergarten an integral component to public schools and education of the students then we cannot charge per capacity to pay and would run the risk of discrimination. He noted if we charge a fee it will impact what the state provides.

Mr. York commented the Governor supports full day kindergarten, but will not mandate it. He indicated once there is a change in that office it will become a mandate. He noted the problem is if districts are not in front of that curve, they will have to scramble to implement full day kindergarten. Mr. York commented that the district and the Board have to be articulate at Deliberative and communicate to the community.

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VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Policies: Review

- GBEA Staff Ethics

Mr. O'Neill commented the policy has some revisions that were suggested by legal counsel. He indicated that a question arose regarding appropriate treatment of all employees in the work place. He noted that the revisions were suggested to address concerns over use of power. He informed the Board that the State legislature will be approving a State Code of Ethics in the near future.

Mr. York made a motion to approve Policy GBEA for a 1st Reading. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

- JRD Publication of Student Photographs and Images

Mr. O'Neill mentioned this policy will be postponed to the January 2018 meetings. He indicated that Mrs. Flynn spent much time in policy development, but feels it is still not ready. He noted there is some concern in this area and in light of some of the things happening in the State, we would like to address it prior to review by the Board.

- JRB Confidential Student Information

Mr. O'Neill indicated the policy is required by law and protects personally identifiable information of students in the district.

Mr. York made a motion to approve Policy GBEAA/JRB for a 1st Reading. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

B. Job Descriptions:

- Tutors: Postponed to January 2018

VIII. MANIFEST

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

IX. PUBLIC INPUT

A. Community Forum

There was no public input.

X. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES:

A. Approval of Minutes from November 29, 2017

Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the non-public minutes from November 29, 2017. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

IX. ADJOURN

Mr. York made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board