

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 February 21, 2018

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair
Derek Barka, Board Member
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member
John York, Board Member
Mr. James L. O'Neill, Superintendent
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator
Tom Lecklider, Principal, LMS
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 6:00 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 24, 2018: *There were no non-public actions.*

E. Presentations and Recognitions

• **LMS Enrollment Plan**

Mr. Lecklider took a moment to recognized scores for the Solo Ensemble Festival where both band and chorus received all A's for their performances. He acknowledged Mark Cloutier for driving to Connecticut to pick up Krispy Kreme donuts for the Washington DC fundraiser. He recognized the partnership with CHS for tutoring students who are struggling.

Mr. Lecklider presented a plan to address declining enrollment in the middle school. He explained that there will be a reduction of two staff positions. Further, he explained the changes to Team Configurations for grades 5 and 6; the reduction in instructional ELA time; and restructuring of the Unified Arts program.

Mr. Lecklider commented enrollment is in the range of 405-413. He believes the content specialist model is a critical model for LMS. He explained the content becomes more challenging as students move up in grade levels. There is much training for teachers and specific certifications for teachers of grades 7 and 8. Content areas require a lot of in depth training. There have been great results when it comes to the content specific areas and it allows the opportunity to look at assessments and the data and concentrate on those content areas. The content specialist model also includes grade 5. Mr. Lecklider believes the team approach is critical at the middle school level, not only for academics, but with LMS core values.

Mr. Lecklider indicated in terms of funding around the state, the middle school state average is \$14,740; LMS is at \$13,432 per pupil, which is \$500,000 below the per pupil cost as compared to the state when the delta is multiplied by the enrollment. He noted delta continues to widen each year and our performance has stayed consistent over the years. He commented the identified students in special education at LMS average 14% - 16%; however, next year a large average of special education students is slated for LMS, which ranges approximately 28%. He noted they are looking at how the staff will meet the needs and provide supports to those students.

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Mr. Lecklider explained the Team Configuration for the upcoming year. There are 87 incoming grade 5 students. Grade 6 netted ten students over last summer. There is concern regarding the impact of the reduction of two teachers on the special education population and the content specialist model. An analysis of the content model and competencies has been completed and provided for the Board. LMS plans to shift the five teacher model in grades 5 and 6 to a four teacher model, which creates a challenge with the ELA curriculum. He noted they being thoughtful and strategic regarding how the needs of the students will be met with one ELA teacher on the team. Mr. Lecklider explained the intent of the curriculum is that the ELA competencies are not only taught in the ELA class and the focus is on content area reading and writing. As the students move up in grade level, the content is more focused on informational and argumentative reading and writing.

Mr. Lecklider indicated in Unified Arts much has been done with our STEAM programming and we have been able to focus on application in technology, computer programming and coding. One of the challenges is to reduce or eliminate the requirement for the librarian to teach a library class. The Learning Commons is a busy place where the specialist should be working with teachers and collaborating. Tech Integration is a need at LMS and as we move toward 1:1 computing and it puts a huge responsibility on our staff. Over the next couple of years he would like to try to free up time for tech integration so we can have that with specialist in the classrooms.

Mr. Lecklider provided an overview of the LMS schedule. Music and Library are semester courses; Band and Chorus are full year courses; Physical Education, Health and FACS are quarterly in grade 5; grade 6 includes Tech Ed/STEAM and computer programming that are semester courses; Physical Education, Band and Chorus, and Art are quarterly courses. There are four teachers for grades 5 and 6; five teachers for grades 7 and 8.

Mr. Barka asked Mr. Lecklider if he supported this plan. Mr. Lecklider does not believe it is the best model.

Mr. Barka commented our job is to prepare children for college, careers and to be good citizens. He indicated we have been focused on STEM and Math and this plan sets us back.

Mrs. Harrison was very concerned about reducing educational time at the middle school. She commented the reading scores are excellent, but they will not stay that way without the instruction time.

Mr. Lecklider commented the content literacy model puts focus on the content model first and literacy is embedded. He indicated the ELA competencies are critical in grades 5 and 6 with very robust curriculum. He noted that ELA is a very challenging area in which to deliver instruction.

Mr. Barka commented even if we reduce two teachers classes could contain 23 students per class. He indicated the Board can look at staffing two years from now, but at this time there are still some large incoming classes and it does not make sense.

Mr. Bourque commented that a reduction in a teacher does not change the amount of time to teach.

Mr. York asked if Reading and Language Arts would be merged. Mr. Lecklider indicated that is the plan.

Mr. York commented the worst case is social studies, science and math does not do a good job at content learning. He asked if the content literacy class will be able to keep the students on target in reading and writing. He indicated the Board would be comfortable if the staff is skilled enough for this.

Mr. Lecklider indicated the staff are skilled and experts in their content areas. He noted it is not a lot to ask to integrate the competencies into their areas, but they can do it.

Mr. York asked how the Board would know content literacy is being taught in the content areas and how it would be monitored. He commented if this plan had been delivered to the Board in November it is possible the teacher reductions would not have been made.

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Mr. Lecklider indicated that he has been talking about per student cost and content specialists for two years. He commented he is proud of where LMS is in achievement at this time. He assured the Board content literacy would be taught in the content areas and that it will be monitored. He noted there are still the same amount of instruction hours. He explained the intent of some of the competencies in ELA will be integrated in the content literacy class. Mr. Lecklider added we have to look at resources in Visions 2.0 that are intended for 90 minute blocks.

Mr. York does not believe the goal of the Board was to handicap LMS. He commented that there was no argument regarding the reduction of teachers during the budget process.

Mrs. MacDonald indicated Mr. Lecklider was very vocal regarding the reductions at LMS.

Mr. York indicated no Board members spoke up about the reductions. Mr. Bourque indicated that this has been discussed over the last two years and that LMS knew this was coming. He noted it comes down to dollars.

Mr. Lecklider commented that there has been discussion about per student cost for years and he has spoken about the middle school model for some time. He indicated when you reduce staff and have a content model with five areas, something has to give.

Mr. York commented there are hour issues with grades 7 and 8 that can be addressed in the coming year with the teachers. He indicated the Board will have to undertake a conversation to decide the best model for the students. He noted this is an opportunity to fine tune the middle school model.

Mr. Lecklider mentioned that he has spoken with all kinds of different school administrators and is aware of how to schedule a middle school. He indicated the most important pieces are the curriculum competencies and indicators and making sure we have highly qualified teachers with certifications. He noted we will have opportunity next year to provide a Unified Arts class for students that are not in that rotation because they have band and chorus. He added that LMS is well aware of the issues and they are trying to address them.

Mr. York commented students are well prepared coming out of elementary school. He indicated this is an opportunity for a whole new process to occur at the middle school and with the new leadership coming in will be a great opportunity at all three schools.

Mrs. Harrison asked if we are reducing instruction time to 45 minutes and if the content literacy class would be a separate class.

Mr. Lecklider indicated ELA will now be a 45 minute class and the fifth class would be a content literacy class in a content area. He commented Reading and Language Arts teachers partner on their planning. Currently they have to determine what is the most meaningful resource in the class. Now the content specialist will have 45 minutes just for that and the other half of that content literacy will be embedded in the content specialists in the other areas.

Mr. O'Neill commented we had time to think about reducing enrollment in the middle school. He indicated that a teacher will be reduced at GMS as well. He noted that Mr. Lecklider presented a plan to meet the goal of reducing two staff at the middle school. Mr. O'Neill commented at the same time ELA is a top priority of the middle school. He asked why reduce a top priority instead of reducing a different area that is not critical to prepare for high school?

Mr. Lecklider commented we talked about class size and number of teachers. He indicated we are looking at a reduction in enrollment in grades 5 and 6 and that is how we created the plan.

Mr. York commented if ELA and Reading are priorities why are we not trimming out Unified Arts teachers. Mr. Lecklider commented that he does not believe that the rationale behind the reductions is based on class size and number of teachers.

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Mr. York commented the Board and Budget Committee voted to reduce two positions in middle school, but how you make it work is up to you. He suggested reducing the semester class for library and move that to a content position.

Mr. Lecklider was concerned that the two reductions were arrived at based on the numbers in grades 5 and 6.

Mr. York indicated the Board did not identify the positions as grades 5 and 6; however, that is what the Budget Committee did. He commented where those reductions occur is up to the administration. He believes reading and writing are more important than Unified Arts. He noted either the middle school will have five teachers teaching five subjects and reduce Unified Arts or have four teachers teaching five subjects and a full Unified Arts staff.

Mr. Lecklider was concerned that the reductions are based on ratios, which are these same conversations around students and ratios will come up at the next budget session. He was concerned there will be more reductions based on ratios.

Mr. York commented that no one knows what the membership of the Budget Committee will be and you cannot manage by what you think the Budget Committee may do. He indicated the next School Board will have their goals and the next Superintendent will have his plans. He noted in this case we knew the Budget Committee was going to use numbers to make their argument.

Mr. Barka commented that it is the Board's fault for allowing numbers to influence our decision on reductions.

Mrs. Harrison commented she cannot support this plan and suggested another plan be considered. Mr. York commented the plan is challenging unless the Board is going to go into the budget to find the money to fund these two positions.

Mrs. Harrison commented 87 students are slated for grade 5 and if there are additional students we will need five teachers. She indicated 28% of those students are identified. She noted we do not know if we can find the money in the budget.

Mr. Lecklider indicated this has all been discussed and he would not bring a plan forward that did not meet the needs of our students. He commented after looking at many things, this was the best plan. He noted that he has much confidence in his staff and we will get the job done. Mr. Lecklider indicated performance has been solid over the years and will continue to be.

Mr. Bourque commented there is still time to work on the plan and decide if this is the best approach.

- Memorial Donation to LMS

Mr. Lecklider presented to the Board for acceptance. He explained the donor who prefers to remain private is donating \$1,000 in memory of Joyce Choate, former LMS teacher and Director of Curriculum & Instruction to LMS for the installation of an information screen in the LMS café.

- GMS PTO Donation

Mr. Bourque presented a donation to GMS from the GMS PTO. He explained the GMS PTO is donating 25 pairs of child snowshoes and 5 pairs of adult snowshoes at a value of \$2,181.09 to GMS for the Snowshoeing class that was approved by the School Board on January 24, 2018.

F. Correspondence

Mr. Bourque commented there have been concerns expressed regarding school security after the tragedy that occurred in Florida. He indicated the Superintendent sent out an email touching on those areas. He noted the Board is continuing to look at safety and security in the schools.

Mr. O'Neill commented the district is constantly concerned about safety and security in our schools. He reported that the Admin Team will be meeting tomorrow to review ALICE training. He indicated the district is looking at

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making sure we are keeping the doors locked when students are in the building and making sure doors are checked several times a day. He noted that the Department of Homeland Security performed a security analysis last year and provided recommendations. Mr. O'Neill indicated last year the district asked voters to approve a warrant article for the purchase and implementation of security items; the Capital Improvement Plan includes more items to make our buildings secure; we have submitted for grant money to make the buildings more secure; we completely reviewed our Emergency Operations Plans, which Homeland Security will be reviewing and will train staff to implement. Mr. O'Neill commented that we realize it is a whole community effort and ask everyone in the community if you see something suspicious contact the police. He noted security is our top priority.

G. Superintendent's Comments

- NHSBA Delegates Resolutions

Mr. O'Neill reported a summary of the resolutions that were proposed at the January 2017 Delegates' Assembly and continuing legislative resolutions is being provided for the School Board to review. He indicated that NHSBA resolutions include the opposition to SB 193, support for fully funding school building aid, support for adequacy aid for full day kindergarten.

- SB 193 Update

Mr. O'Neill provided to the Board an update on Senate Bill 193, which establishes education freedom savings accounts for students. He explained the bill establishes education freedom savings accounts for children between the ages of 5 and 20 and provides stabilization grants to certain school districts. He indicated criteria for the savings accounts are subject to eligible students whose annual household income is less than or equal to 300% of the federal poverty guidelines; who is assigned to a school at for 2 consecutive years has been unable to demonstrate it provides the opportunity for an adequate education; who has an IEP or accommodation plan under section 504; who applied and was not admitted to a chartered public school or whose application for an education tax credit scholarship was not funded. He commented the bill has passed the Senate as amended by the House.

Mr. O'Neill expressed concern regarding the bill as he believes it will be the disarticulation of our schools if it becomes law. He commented it is not just impactful from the potential loss of revenue, but the fragmentation and disarticulation of public schools that allow open enrollment anywhere you want. He indicated public schools have two roles: academics and socialization. He was concerned that we are walking down a slippery slope of politics in the schools and our democracy is at risk the more we polarize and fragment our public schools.

- Governor's STEM Scholarship Program

Mr. O'Neill provided information regarding a STEM/Robotics dual enrollment program for junior and senior students at community colleges. He indicated that a Memorandum of Understanding and a Board policy need to be drafted and approved by the Board prior to the implementation of this program. He explained once in place, students who have taken a STEM or STEM related course in the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters will be reimbursed for up to two courses after grades are posted and it is verified they have passed the course with a C or better if both the policy and agreement are in place. As of Fall 2018, students can take up to 2 STEM or STEM-related courses for free without paying up front if the documents are in place. Mr. O'Neill indicated we have an opportunity for our students to get college credit at no cost. He noted that courses can also be offered at the high school if the faculty member(s) has a Masters in an area offered at the community college and the college will provide a supervising professor.

Mr. O'Neill asked Board members to be diligent in approving an amended policy and the Memorandum of Understanding for this program so we can have more students from CHS taking courses in community college in the fall.

- CHS Graduation Date

Mr. O'Neill indicated the district has had six snow days this year, which places the last day of school on June 21, 2018. LMS Grade 8 graduation will occur on June 20. He noted that CHS administrators believe that seniors will have the appropriate hours/days in order to graduate on June 8. Historically, we calculate the hours of participation the seniors had to see if we can graduate seniors as early as possible, but have to follow the law.

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- Educator Code of Ethics

Mr. O'Neill indicated a question arose regarding a code of ethics that is under study at the state level. He explained the Commissioner's Task Force has been working on creating a code of ethics for educators. He noted that the Board has a policy in place for Staff Ethics at this time. The state team came up with finalized document that is being reviewed around the state and when adopted will serve as the guidelines for professionals in the State of NH.

- 2017-2018 School Calendar

Mr. O'Neill indicated that February 7 was scheduled as a late arrival day for professional development. He noted that because of the closing of school for a snow day on February 7, we lost that late arrival day. He asked Board members to approve the rescheduling of the late arrival day to March 7 so that staff can have preliminary ALICE training prior to the March 13 training.

Board members discussed the impact on scheduling a late arrival day two weeks prior to its occurrence and that it may not be enough time for parents to make arrangements for their children.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that when there is a delayed opening due to weather, parents only receive two hours notice to make other arrangements.

Mr. York made a motion to approve a delayed opening for March 7, 2018. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 3-2-0.

H. Community Forum

Janine Anctil, 43 Tanager Way, asked if there is a way to open up the before school program at GMS for the March 7 delayed opening.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that March 7 is two weeks from today. He noted people accommodate to a delayed opening when there is inclement weather on significantly shorter notice. He commented this is a very important decision to make and we need to do this training. He believes 14 days notice for parents is more time than they would have with a two hour notice in the morning for delayed opening because of the weather.

Mrs. Anctil commented on the LMS schedule and believes that reducing two positions in a school that may have an increase in enrollment in a few years is short sighted and provides a poor working environment. She believes longer term planning would be more beneficial and that a class size of 18 is educationally sound. Making higher class sizes in grades 5 and 6 because they are higher in grades 7 and 8 is not educationally sound. Mrs. Anctil asked if there is a surplus budget to return to the town and if we can use some of that money to fund the two positions. She indicated she listened to the plan presented and believes that reading and writing are foundation skills. She commented they are doing a great job in those classes in grades 5 and 6 and it should not be crammed into 45 minutes. She noted she is skeptical of the content literacy class model if a teacher has not been teaching that subject and does not have training for that subject. She was concerned teachers may not be able to deliver to the competencies. She commented that the two positions should be retained.

Mr. Bourque indicated that we are going back to the model that was in place three years ago. He noted the average class size in NH is 23.5 in middle school and we will have 21 at LMS. He commented the Board is fiscally responsible to return surplus monies for purposes for which they were not spent and we cannot spend that money on what we want. He noted there is also a class size policy and Mr. Lecklider stated he would not propose a plan he did not think would work.

Mrs. Anctil commented the upcoming grade 5 class is made up of 28% special education students. Mr. Bourque indicated that is why we are pushing for the new Special Education Coordinator.

Heather Dwyer, 31 Wren Street, commented it is easier with numbers to eliminate a teacher. She indicated we do specialize in what we do. She noted she is the 6th grade Language Arts teacher at LMS and there are many standards and competencies. She understands we are moving to a competency based system at the high school and some will

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be moved to the middle school. Mrs. Dwyer asked how that would look on the report card as she does not see how that will work.

Nate Cooper, LEA President, commented as we move forward and plan long term, much of the conversation about enrollment is trying to make decisions about staffing. He indicated the conversations in October were not about where those reductions at LMS would be made. He suggested as we move forward, if possible, it would be beneficial to start planning or predicting within the fall where those specific reductions would be to the extent that teachers and parents could have an opportunity to weigh in on those programs. Mr. Cooper commented as this cohort starts moving up to the high school we will be talking about those programmatic changes in the coming years.

I. School Board Comments

Mr. York mentioned he read an article regarding College Board AP statistics released recently and that Massachusetts was ranked #1 in the country. He noted 32% of their students scored a 3 or higher. He indicated that he found information for NH, but there was no breakdown included. He requested the information for CHS and asked when it will be provided.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he will look into it and request it from CHS Guidance.

Mr. Bourque commented that the School Board made a decision on the new Superintendent. He announced Dr. Michael Jette has been selected as Superintendent of the Litchfield School District. He noted that Dr. Jette is very excited about joining Litchfield.

Mr. O'Neill believes Dr. Jette is a good choice for Litchfield.

Mr. Bourque thanked all those who participated on the screening committee and for the input the Board received from the public.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned as testimony to how well the job was done, we had the district not successful in finding a Superintendent visit with us and met with himself and Mrs. Messenger.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Public Minutes:

- January 24, 2018

Mr. York made a motion to approve the public minutes of January 24, 2018. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- February 10, 2018

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

III. REPORTS

A. Curriculum Report

B. Principals Reports

The Curriculum Director and Principals have provided their written reports for the Board.

C. Business Administrator's Report

Mr. Izbicki provided a financial report and budget update for the Board. He reported that warrant articles 1 and 2 were amended and are on the ballot; ALICE training is scheduled for March 13; an application was submitted to the state for an infrastructure grant to build a secure vestibule for GMS; the FY18 audit is scheduled; RFP's will be released over the summer for transportation, audit and general services. He reported the food service audit occurred this week and will be compiling their findings.

Mr. Izbicki reported the district received renewals for Workers Compensation Insurance and Property & Liability Insurance.

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Mr. York briefly discussed the state of the general fund with Mr. Izbicki and thanked him for managing the money of the district well.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2015-2018 Goals Update and Discussion

Mr. O'Neill provided an updated status of the three year Board approved goals and indicators.

The Board will discuss the possible focus of the goals for the next five years.

Recommendation to the Board: review the final update to the goals in June 2018; provide a focus of the ensuing set of goals to the new Superintendent so a goal plan can be drafted for the Board to discuss over the summer months.

B. Capital Improvements Discussion

The Board has been provided a list of identified, prioritized items from the Building Assessment, which were recommended to be combined on a bond by the Capital Planning Committee. The report includes a breakdown of the items and prioritized needs.

The Board discussed the direction of the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) recommendations.

Mr. York commented he feels good about handing the recommendations over to the next Board. He believes these are the items the Capital Planning Committee feels need to occur. He strongly recommended this Board "lock this down" by the summer because you will have to go to the voters with a bond and be prepared to argue why it is necessary. He commented we do not spend a lot on maintaining our buildings, but we spend a lot on preventing them from falling apart.

Mrs. Harrison commented the Board needs to have a discussion about a long term plan. She indicated even if we did go to bond and bring the schools up to code, it does not address space needs. She believes it is a good start to address issues.

Mr. York commented the CPC discussed a new school and long term planning. He indicated the new Superintendent may have more experience with the politics of getting a new school approved by the voters. He believes that the elementary school has to be fixed regardless and a new school could be as much as five years away.

Mr. Bourque commented the biggest issue was maintaining the buildings and having them last as long as possible. He indicated old and antiquated items need to be replaced.

Mr. York suggested after this is completed, the Board should request a long term maintenance plan and put it in the budget. He indicated the consensus of the CPC was to go to bond with the items that need immediate replacement.

C. Job Descriptions:

Mr. O'Neill presented draft job descriptions for the different types of tutors employed in the district. He asked the Board to review the job descriptions and provide suggestions for revisions, if applicable, and for approval of the job descriptions.

- Reading Tutor

Mr. York made a motion to approve the Reading Tutor job description. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- Math Tutor

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the Math Tutor job description. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

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- Title I Tutor

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the Title I Tutor job description. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- Enrichment Tutor

Mr. York made a motion to approve the Enrichment Tutor job description. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

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 Mr. York, the Board entered non-public session at 8:32 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; 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 9:30 p.m. Mr. Barka 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 9:30 p.m. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board