

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 March 21, 2018

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member
Robert Meyers, Board Member
Tara Hershberger, Board Member
Mr. 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. PUBLIC SESSION

6:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and facilitated until a Chair is approved.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Review & Revision of Agenda

Revisions to the agenda include the removal of Policies JFCA and JICI (Weapons on School Property) under New Business. Mr. O'Neill commented there has been much discussion around the ability to carry weapons and clarification around the RSA regarding guns in schools. He indicated the existing Safe School Zone policy is sufficient at this time with regard to prohibiting weapons in schools.

Mr. Bourque commented the Legislature has not approved the bill allowing guns in schools.

Mr. O'Neill explained the RSA reflects that local municipalities cannot change state laws in their municipalities. He indicated a bill was brought forward to allow concealed carry in schools, but was inexpedient to legislate. He noted the current law states concealed weapons can be held by NH residents. He expressed that he is hopeful the Legislature will eventually allow the public schools to make those decisions and preserve safety.

D. School Board Reorganization:

- Welcome New Members

Mr. O'Neill welcomed newly elected Board members and congratulated all Board members elected.

- Nominations for Chair

The Superintendent asked for nominations for Board Chair.

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to nominate Brian Bourque as Chair. Mrs. Hershberger seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- Nominations for Vice Chair

Mr. Bourque asked for nominations for Vice Chair

Mr. Bourque made a motion to nominate Christina Harrison as Vice Chair. Mrs. Hershberger seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- Signing of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Board members signed the School Board Code of Ethics and School Board Code of Conduct.

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- Committee Assignments

The Board Chair asked members to volunteer for committee assignments: Budget Committee, Capital Planning Committee, Joint Loss Management Committee, Technology Committee, PERC, Wellness Committee, LEA Negotiations, LSS Negotiations. Descriptions of the committees were provided to Board members.

Budget Committee: Robert Meyers; Alternate: Christina Harrison

CPC: Brian Bourque

JLMC: Elizabeth MacDonald

Technology Committee: Tara Hershberger

PERC: Christina Harrison; Alternate: Elizabeth MacDonald

Wellness Committee: Christina Harrison

LEA Negotiations: Christina Harrison, Tara Hershberger

LSS Negotiations: Brian Bourque, Elizabeth MacDonald

Mr. O'Neill announced that Dr. Michael Jette, Superintendent Elect, is in attendance this evening. He commented that he is excited for Dr. Jette and welcomed him to the district.

E. Summary of Non-Public Actions from February 21, 2018:

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

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

Mr. York made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of February 14, 2018. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2.

Summary of Non-Public Actions from March 7, 2018:

Non-Public minutes of the 1st Session were sealed by the Board. There were no Board actions in the 2nd Session.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to unseal the non-public minutes from March 7, 2018 for the district legal counsel only. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mrs. Hershberger and Mr. Meyers abstaining.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to unseal the non-public minutes from November 15, 2018 for the district legal counsel only. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mrs. Hershberger and Mr. Meyers abstaining.

F. Presentations and Recognitions

- School Board Member Service

Mr. Bourque recognized Derek Barka for his long service to the School Board and School District.

Mr. Barka commented that his service was very fulfilling and he enjoyed serving and negotiating with the LEA.

- CHS Press Box Committee

Members of the committee did not attend. The topic was postponed until the April 4 meeting.

- GMS PTO Donation

The Superintendent announced the GMS PTO is donating up to five 6' lifetime picnic tables to be used in the enclosed courtyard in the center of the grade 1 and 2 wing. The total cost of the tables is \$976.25. The tables are lightweight and extremely durable.

G. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

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H. Superintendent's Comments

- 2018-2019 School Calendar

The Superintendent provided a draft of the 2018-2019 School District calendar to the Board for discussion and / or approval. He indicated the first day of school is proposed for September 4, 2018, which is aligned with School Board policy. He explained in order to have as many five day instructional weeks as possible, and because there are typically broken weeks in November, the two days used for parent/teacher conferences and teacher workshops were moved to the week of Thanksgiving Break. Mr. O'Neill reported that the district was forced to cancel ALICE training that was scheduled for March 13 due to the weather. He suggested that the delayed opening proposed for September 26, 2018 be switched with the no school day on March 12 to accommodate ALICE training in the district if the district cannot complete the training before the end of this school year

Mr. O'Neill reported that Bedford did not get a two day waiver from the NH DOE for the outage days in October. Instead, he noted they completed the calculations for instructional hours required and discovered they met the state requirements. He indicated that calculations will be completed this week for Litchfield schools and we will determine if we can cover the two of the seven days we have used. Mr. O'Neill commented if that is the case, there is a possibility we can schedule ALICE training by the end of the year.

Mr. Meyers asked if there is any way to schedule another teacher workshop day into this year.

Mr. O'Neill explained 1.5 of those days is used for teachers to prepare to start the school year in August. He indicated that "opening day" activities are schedule that week as well. He commented that scenario was considered and teachers would need to be available from 8 am to 3 pm. Mr. O'Neill indicated the only day during the August opening day activities we could schedule it would be Day 1, but we would have to forego all the other activities that day. He noted it is not possible to schedule the training during one of those three days.

Mrs. Harrison asked if there is flexibility in the number of days for professional development prior to the start of school. She asked if Monday, August 27 could be added in order to complete ALICE training.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he would have to speak to the LEA and see if the teachers agree. He commented he would open a discussion with the unions to see if that is acceptable by terms of the contracts.

Mrs. Harrison mentioned that she has had feedback regarding the late arrival days are difficult for parents. She suggested a full day at the beginning of the year to eliminate the late arrivals.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the contract with the LEA is 180 teaching days and 6 professional development days and we have to work within the contract. He commented he would advocate for more full days for professional development. Mr. O'Neill noted one conversation is that we can go to a 186 day contractual situation, not 180 plus 6. He mentioned if we had 177 days and complied with the number of hours required for instruction we could have 9 professional development days. He indicated the Board has talked about instructional time in the past.

Mr. Meyers suggested using a day during Thanksgiving break week.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he investigate doing the training early in the year and having an equitable arrangement with the teachers. He noted the information and options will be brought to the Board.

Mrs. Hershberger commented that she has heard from some parents that changing the entire week off during Thanksgiving break is taxing on parents' work schedules.

Mr. Bourque indicated that he has heard the opposite and that it is easier than taking of a day here and there.

Mrs. MacDonald commented having four late arrival days is stressful.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that, in looking at the calendar, we tried to make a commitment to having more full weeks of instruction to have more learning occur in the classrooms. He believes the reason there are late arrival days is

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because the CBA contains six days of professional development as teachers asked for more in their contract some years ago. He suggested in the coming year discussions include how we use time around education.

Mr. Bourque noted that the school calendar policy is also part of the CBA.

Mr. O'Neill commented we will come back with more input regarding the calendar for the next meeting.

- CHS Graduation Date

The Superintendent recommended June 15 as the date for CHS Graduation due to the significant amount of no school days this year. He indicated the last day of school at this time is June 22. He noted it is not possible to have graduation on June 8 this year. He noted the Board is expected to approve the date for graduation.

Mrs. Hershberger made a motion to set June 15, 2018 as the date for CHS graduation. Mr. Meyers seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. MacDonald abstaining.

- CHS AP Scores Analysis

The Superintendent provided a 5 year school AP score summary and comparative data to the Board.

Mr. Bourque suggested that the data is reviewed when the CHS Principal can be in attendance to provide comment.

- Access to Supporting Documents on the School Board Agenda

Mr. O'Neill indicated a question arose concerning access by the public to materials provided for the School Board and when the materials are considered public documents. He provided an opinion from the district's legal counsel regarding the concern. He noted that the public's access to Board materials is when those materials become public. Preliminary drafts, memos and other documents not in final form are not public documents. Once preliminary drafts or other draft documents are given to a quorum of the Board they are subject to the Right to Know law and become public documents. If a document is circulated to a quorum of the Board it becomes a public document. Mr. O'Neill indicated that once documents are shared with the Board and the Board has had a chance to review them and/or discuss them they should be placed on the website.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned legal counsel will meet with the Board in closed session on April 4 to speak about important Board topics.

I. Community Forum

Paula Izbicki, 3 Kokokehas Circle, commented that it is an exciting time in Litchfield, with a new Board and a new leader. She commended Mr. O'Neill on his direction and actions in Litchfield. She believes Litchfield will be a top 10 district soon. She shared some of her best practices with the Board:

- Surrounds yourselves with motivated people
- Always be on the hunt for talent as you want the best people in your district
- Potential candidates for Superintendent are hesitant to apply for the job because a new leader gets lambasted by the Board
- Take your time to know your position
- Take time to direct the public to the appropriate chain of command.

Mrs. Izbicki commented that it is clear our district has passion for education and she sees things moving forward. She expressed disappointment that the Special Education Coordinator article failed and believes it is an important position to place on the ballot next year. She indicated that she would like to hear about personalized learning and varied learning in the schools. Mrs. Izbicki encouraged the Board to make goals of their own and to reach out to the community to determine their direction for GMS. She asked Board members to get clear and concise messages out so people that come to the Board are heard. She commented that she would support a committee focused on repairing our school buildings that has community membership. Mrs. Izbicki was hopeful the new Curriculum Director would be a more administrative role. She believes the district is moving forward in a positive direction.

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Mr. Bourque mentioned that the Board has a Capital Planning Committee and asked Mrs. Izbicki if she would like to serve on that committee. Mrs. Izbicki agreed to serve on the committee.

Amy Goldstein, 1 Spicebush Circle, commented on AP courses. She indicated that her daughter is taking AP classes next year. She noted there are nine AP classes listed. She was concerned that CHS is cutting regular courses because there are not enough students enrolled in those courses, but AP classes run regardless of the enrollment. She asked the Board to consider which classes are running when enrollment numbers are reviewed. Mrs. Goldstein indicated that colleges will not accept an endless number of AP credits. She noted that students still have to take the courses in college regardless if they took an AP class (which is dependent on the college). She was concerned that we are putting too much weight in AP classes and putting those students above the portion of those not taking AP classes.

Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, commented that some student who take the AP courses do not take the exams and those credits are not transferrable. She noted parents are paying for the exams, therefore, are paying for the credits.

Liz MacDonald, as a community member, asked about approval of the Brick Fundraiser flyer for the Athletic Boosters.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that flyer has been approved.

Nate Cooper, LEA President, thanked the Board for allowing him to speak. He congratulated the new members of the Board on their election and congratulated Dr. Jette on his new position as Superintendent Elect of Litchfield. He stated that teachers are ecstatic that the public supported full day kindergarten. He indicated that many individuals made it a reality and he thanked Mrs. Harrison for her tireless effort on the project. Mr. Cooper commented it was nice to see Mr. Barka recognized for his service on the Board. He thanked Mr. Barka for changing the conversation within the community about education and educational issues. He thanked Mr. York for his service on the Board. Mr. Cooper shared Mrs. Izbicki's assessment that Litchfield will become a top school district in the State.

J. School Board Comments

Mrs. Harrison welcomed Mr. Meyers and Mrs. Hershberger to the Board. She welcomed Mrs. MacDonald back to the Board as well. She indicated that she is excited to have new energy and new ideas on the Board. She offered to assist new members and provide insight, if needed. She noted that she was glad to see new members taking an interest in the training offered by NHSBA. She suggested new members try to commit to communication and the chain of command and keep a "30,000 foot view" of the district (i.e. let the experts do their jobs). Mrs. Harrison encouraged Board members to ask questions and focus on what is best for all the children in the district.

Mr. Bourque echoed Mrs. Harrison's comments. He indicated that there are times a Board member can get wrapped up in their own child's issues in the schools. He noted there are many opinions in the community. He advised members, when someone approaches with a complaint, comment, request, etc., it is best to direct that person to the appropriate person in the chain of command. Mr. Bourque mentioned there is much conjecture in the public. He suggested that if Board members would like to post something on Facebook, to channel it through Mrs. Harrison as she is the member assigned to Facebook communication for the Board. He recommended individual Board members not post their own comments without going through the Chair.

Mrs. Hershberger asked if this is the process in every district and that it is not like this in Manchester. Mr. Bourque indicated Manchester does not have the same type of School Board and is a different governmental set up.

Mrs. Hershberger indicated part of her learning is to meet with leaders and garner feedback from community members. She asked about alternate methods of research outside of Board meetings.

Mrs. Harrison indicated the Board has a Facebook page where we post information and answer questions. She noted if she cannot find the answer she will direct people to the Chair and the Superintendent. She believes there is a place for getting feedback from people and that the Board should consider what is out there and make a decision going forward.

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Mrs. Hershberger was concerned there was not enough time for new Board members to digest the goals information prior to this meeting.

Mr. Bourque indicated the topic is on the agenda to prepare for a discussion regarding goal setting.

Mrs. Hershberger asked if there has been any consideration regarding using Facebook Live for Board meetings to get comments from the public while viewing.

Mr. Bourque was concerned with taking comments from the public using social media because you do not know who you are really talking to. He believes the Board is not ready for Facebook Live.

Mr. O'Neill commented up until we moved into the Town Hall for meetings, the Superintendent sat at the table with the Board. He indicated it is important that the Superintendent and School Board are a team. He would like to see that arrangement again. In reference to community dialogue, he commented there are many methods and forums for community input about the schools. Mr. O'Neill indicated the Board is a representational board and spends much time dialoging about issues and making decisions. He noted if the community does not like those decisions you will be informed. He cautioned having live conversation may not be helpful for the Board. He commented the Board represents the community and makes the decisions so the students can benefit. He noted functional and successful boards channel communication through the Board Chair (chain of command).

Mr. Bourque acknowledged that many parents who would like to attend a Board meeting may feel they cannot attend because they have small children. Mr. Bourque indicated people are more than welcome to bring their children to the meetings.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Public Minutes:

- February 21, 2018

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the public minutes of February 21, 2018. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mr. Meyers and Mrs. Hershberger abstaining.

- March 7, 2018

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the public minutes of March 7, 2018. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-0-2, with Mr. Meyers and Mrs. Hershberger abstaining.

III. REPORTS

A. Business Administrator's Report

Mr. Izbicki commented that he was impressed with the number of voters that came to cast votes during the storm.

- Financial and Budget Updates

Mr. Izbicki provided the district financial report and budget updates for the School Board. He noted that three of the four warrants were approved by the voters and the Special Education Coordinator article failed for the second year.

- FY19 MS-22

The School Board signed the MS-22 for submission to the NH Department of Revenue Association.

- Kindergarten Update

Mr. Izbicki provided a Kindergarten update for the School Board. He reported that he met with Schiavi Leasing this morning to discuss the portable classrooms for kindergarten. He noted that the building is set for delivery during the beginning weeks of July. He indicated that in speaking with the auditor it was suggested that a Capital Project Fund be set up for the project.

Mr. Izbicki reported that he spoke with the Town Administrator regarding the payment of impact fees and the Town will be handling impact fees through a reimbursement method.

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- Acceptance of Impact Fees

The School Board will be asked to formerly accept elementary impact fees that were approved for use by the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of offsetting the costs for full day Kindergarten.

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to accept elementary impact fees in the amount of \$231,700 for the purpose of housing full day kindergarten. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- Security Items

Mr. Izbicki provided a list of security items requested by the Board that need to be addressed at each building. He indicated that the district has applied for a grant through the Department of Homeland Security to outfit the school with a secure vestibule. He indicated that the application has now moved to the Governor for approval. The list of security items that have been completed include upgraded video monitors for external cameras, 3M security film installed on main office windows, security badge access added to entry doors of portable classrooms. Items to be completed include fencing at GMS once the new kindergarten portable building is installed. Items for review and approval by the Board include installation of designated monitors in the offices of the Principal and Assistant Principal at each school; review coverage of external cameras, common areas and emergency exits at all schools; install internal cameras in hallways and common areas in all schools; test emergency alerting at all schools; reconfigure main entrance of LMS and CHS to limit access to main building.

Mr. Bourque asked why LMS was not included in the application for a secure vestibule.

Mr. Izbicki indicated that the timing of the application was challenging. He noted the grant for the vestibule is approximately \$87,000 and requires 20% matching funds that we can take from the Capital Reserve Fund, which will be brought to the Board for approval.

Mr. Izbicki reported that effective this Monday, an SRO officer was assigned to our district. He announced Officer David Donnelly will be in district Monday through Wednesday all day and part of the day on Thursday. He noted the remaining time will be covered by patrol officers.

Mr. Meyers suggested improving the radio communication in the district and to look into online programs that can be monitored on the computer desktop.

Mr. Izbicki indicated there are many options being considered and discussed. He noted that once a decision is made, staff will receive proper training.

Mrs. Hershberger asked if it would be a good idea for new board members to meet with Mr. Izbicki for an overview on the financials, budget, and business of the district.

Mr. O'Neill agreed that would be a good idea. He suggested Mr. Izbicki can tour the buildings with the new members and show them what was highlighted by Homeland Security in their evaluation of our buildings.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Governor's STEM Scholarship Program

- Policy Revision: IHCD Advanced Course Work/College Placement

Mr. O'Neill indicated this policy was revised to be in line with requirements and criteria for the partnership with the Community College System of NH and the Litchfield School District, which will allow juniors and seniors to take advanced course work and/or advanced placement courses in a dual and concurrent enrollment program with community colleges in NH. He indicated that there is no cost to the students for the courses; however, if students decide to take more than two courses per year, additional courses are at a cost.

Board members were concerned about language in the policy that referred to where students can take advanced courses not offered at their high school. The policy language will be reviewed and revisited at the next meeting.

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- Memorandum of Understanding between CCSNH and Litchfield School District

Mr. O'Neill indicated the MOU between the Community College System of NH and the Litchfield School District has been drafted and is being provided for Board review. It is expected the Superintendent and School Board Chair will sign the MOU.

B. School Board Goals Discussion

The Board discussed goal setting during the commentary section of the meeting.

V. MANIFEST

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

A. Community Forum

Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, was concerned about communication between the public and those on the Board. She encouraged the Board to address this issue. She commented that many people have told her they have ideas they want to share with the Board, but lack the confidence to sit in front of a microphone and speak. She believes their voices need to be heard. Mrs. Corbeil commented that she is aware of the Board goals and has seen them, but she does not believe that many have. She indicated the Board should seek input from the community regarding ideas for goals for the district. She commented it is important for the Board to find a way to gather that information and find a way to get feedback from people in the community, perhaps through surveys.

Mr. Bourque indicated Mrs. Harrison has done a good job on Facebook and a survey can be posted there. He noted that people can email the Board.

Mrs. Corbeil commented many of the people she is speaking about are those that will not email or write to the Board. She indicated they may not respond to surveys, but it is important the Board sends it out.

Mrs. Hershberger indicated there have to be multiple methods of communication.

Mr. Bourque was concerned that people do not show up at informational meetings or the annual school district meeting.

Mrs. Corbeil commented in this digital age coming up with some way once a year to ask parents what is important to them or communicate what the district is doing is not difficult.

Mrs. Harrison suggested sending out a year end survey to ask how the district is doing.

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 into non-public session at 7:58 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. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Bourque, yes; Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mrs. MacDonald, yes; Mr. Meyers, yes; Mrs. Hershberger, yes.

VIII. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Upon a motion by Mrs. Harrison, the Board returned to public session at 8:50 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.

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IX. ADJOURN

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board