

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 April 19, 2017

In Attendance: Brian Bourque, Chair
Derek Barka, Vice Chair (*excused*)
Christina Harrison, Board Member
Paula Izbicki, Board Member (*excused at 7:00 p.m.*)
John York, Board Member
James L. O'Neill, Superintendent
Frank Markiewicz, 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. Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 March 29, 2017:

Mr. Bourque made a motion to accept the resignations and retirement requests as presented. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. York made a motion to accept all nominations, with the exception of the part time CHS French teacher, which will be voted on at the April 5, 2017 School Board meeting. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

From April 5, 2017:

Mr. Bourque made a motion to accept the resignation of Hilda Lawrence, Director of Food Services, effective June 30, 2017. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to accept the resignation of Frank Markiewicz, Business Administrator, effective June 30, 2017. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mr. Bourque made a motion to accept the resignation of Julie Heon, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, effective June 30, 2017. Mrs. Izbicki seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

E. Presentations and Recognitions:

- Request for Funding for Destination Imagination Teams

Maurissa Fluet, DI Coordinator, presented a proposal for funding toward travel costs for the DI teams who will be traveling to Knoxville, TN for a global tournament in May. She noted that a team from the elementary level and a team from the middle level are participating and requested funding in the amount of \$3,750 for each team for registration and travel. She indicated that the cost for each team to go to the tournament is over \$10,000. Mrs. Fluet commented that the teams are in the midst of fundraising. She noted that the Board contributed \$3,750 last year and hopes that the Board will contribute a total of \$7,500 for the two Destination Imagination teams this year.

Mr. Bourque was concerned that the circumstances have changed this year since Destination Imagination, a PTO sponsored activity, is now a non-profit organization. He indicated using public funds to support a non-profit, non-school sponsored activity opens the district up to, not only liability, but to solicitation from other non-profit organizations, teams and activities. He added that last year the activity may not have been school sponsored, but the school was used for the activity.

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Mrs. Fluet commented that DI was part of the GMS PTO last year and is more an academic competition than an athletic one. She believes that a precedent for other teams and organizations will not be set.

Mrs. Izbicki asked if the Board approved any funding toward the CHS Music Hawaii trip. Mr. Bourque indicated that the Board did not approve any funding toward that trip.

Mr. York asked for the reason DI became a non-profit and moved away from becoming a school activity.

Mrs. Fluet indicated the activity was never school sponsored and this was the first year we tried to become school sponsored. She commented that discussions were held with the principals and the insurance company regarding requirements and criteria. She noted we were not going to be able to be covered by the district's liability insurance.

Mr. York asked why the program moved away from a self-funded program.

Mrs. Fluet indicated to be school sponsored we would have to meet at the school and there is no space at the school to accommodate building activities for the competition, which the district's insurance would not cover.

Mr. York asked why it would be a violation of the insurance if it is off-site. Mr. Bourque explained in order to be covered by the insurance, some of the tools needed would have to be used in the school.

Mr. O'Neill commented when we spoke with Primex they informed us that if it is a school sponsored activity practices, putting together materials, and using the tools would have to be done on school grounds; however, we could not facilitate those things without liability. He indicated that transportation was a concern and our policies are not compatible with DI transportation methods. He added another concern was the legal requirements for volunteers.

Mrs. Fluet commented both sides compromised a little, but in the end we felt we could not offer the program we wanted to offer and have the children feel that they can be competitive. She indicated there were too many limitations on storage and building.

Mr. York commented the Robotics program does not work on their projects in the high school all the time and is no different than this program.

Mr. Bourque indicated Robotics is not a non-profit organization.

Mr. O'Neill explained Robotics is predominantly centered in the district and DI is predominantly centered in homes and off-campus. He indicated the challenge always been once you start getting insurance and legal involved, your insurance goes away at the school.

Mrs. Fluet commented many schools are running into the same issue and will have to redefine how it is done.

Mrs. Izbicki commented what schools are giving DI Teams is not a lot. She mentioned that DI is not a school sponsored activity in Hollis.

Mrs. Harrison commented Robotics in our district is a stipend position and a school program. She indicated there is a difference.

Mrs. Izbicki commented DI is expensive and they require that you pay for everything. She indicated that she is not opposed to DI, but is struggling with the budget and the things that we had to reduce.

Mrs. Fluet commented they are all your children, too. She noted we have more children in DI than are involved in AP classes at CHS.

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Mr. York commented that when Robotics was struggling some years ago, a motion was made a Deliberative Session to double the funding and to include it in the budget annually. He indicated that the same should be done with DI, or put it on the warrant to see if voters approve moving it into the budget.

Mrs. Fluet mentioned there was money appropriated for DI in the GMS budget this year. Mr. Bourque explained all the money designated for DI has been removed and the Budget Committee agreed it was a good idea at the time. He was concerned because the situation has changed and DI is now a non-profit organization. He believes approving funding for DI will open up a Pandora's box. He indicated the Board discussed academics and sports over the last two meetings and athletics plays a large part of development in schools as well.

Mr. York made a motion to allocate \$7,500 for Destination Imagination. There was no second. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Bourque commended Mrs. Fluet for her work with Destination Imagination. He indicated that she has done a fabulous job with the program. He suggested placing funding for DI on the warrant next year.

Mrs. Fluet commented the Board talked about thinking outside the box over the last two meetings. She indicated that classifying DI as a non-profit was creative, but the Board's unwillingness to approve funding is the opposite of what you would like everyone else to do. She wanted to know where the advantage is for DI for having done it the right way.

Mrs. Izbicki commented even if DI was still funded by the district, she would not have voted for this motion. She indicated she would rather put the money into opportunities for students to experience outside of the school day.

Mrs. Fluet commented that they can change the way the program operates. Mrs. Izbicki indicated that the Board needs to take a hard look at the program.

Mr. York commented that this program is more in line with the way the high school is used. He indicated that the Board has allowed sports to come into the high school. He commented the Wrestling program was run by a non-profit organization and they received money from the district. He noted that Lacrosse will come to the Board to become part of the district. He stated the district funded part of the Wrestling program when they were a self-funded program so the precedent has been set.

Mr. Bourque commented the Lacrosse teams are being coached by employees of the school, which is no different than Wrestling.

Mr. York indicated the coaches were paid by the non-profit organization and the Board let them continue until Wrestling became part of the school sports program. He commented at the same time the non-profit organization kept operating and promoting. Mr. York noted that the Board provided funds to DI last year, which makes it a school-sponsored program.

Mr. Bourque disagreed.

- H.L. Turner Group: Buildings Conditions Assessment Report

Doug Proctor and Bill Hickey, representing The Turner Group, presented a draft report and recommendations regarding the condition of the district school building and systems.

Mr. Hickey thanked Mr. Ross and Mr. Reynolds for their help during the building inspections. He commented that a team from HL Turner Group walked through each school building and inspected mechanical systems, structural integrity, electrical systems, HVAC, interior and exterior of the buildings, as well as parking lots and walkways.

Mr. Hickey reported:

- mechanical systems controls in all three buildings are outdated and aged, and in dire need of replacement, which is a large dollar item;

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- speaker and clock systems are beyond their useful life;
- fire alarm systems are beyond their useful life;
- LMS roof is at the end of its life span;
- LED lighting is recommended;
- sprinklers recommended for GMS;
- CHS exterior finish system on outside of the gym has a short life span.

He indicated CHS was well built and all three schools are structurally in good condition.

Mr. Markiewicz reported the report on the feasibility of the 1930s building will be submitted as a separate draft.

Mr. Hickey indicated given the current condition of the building it really does not have a functional use. He noted there is an accessibility issue and the building requires significant renovation. He suggested that the frame floor system can be removed, bringing the lower level floor up to the school level as the cost to put in a stairwell and elevator would not be worth the investment.

Mr. Proctor indicated water is getting into the walls and deteriorating the windows.

Mr. Bourque asked how much work would be needed for the building to house classrooms. Mr. Proctor indicated that it would require significant renovation.

Mr. Bourque asked if the SAU offices can be moved into the building. Mr. Hickey indicated that could be possible, but there would be accessibility and parking issues. Mr. Proctor indicated the renovations would still be required and another entrance would have to be created.

Mr. Bourque commented that it may be possible to make a couple of classrooms in the building. Mr. Hickey indicated that plans would have to be prepared. He suggested that a specialty room (i.e. physical therapy, occupational therapy) may work well in there.

Mr. O'Neill asked based on what you are saying to us, what is the cost analysis of doing what you recommend vs the cost of a new building with heating, sprinklers, etc.?

Mr. Hickey indicated sometimes the more historical buildings have value and sentiment, but there is not a lot of use for that building. He commented if you had a clean slate there, that would be the best option. He noted energy efficiency is always a concern with older buildings.

Mr. Proctor commented if you pull down that building and build new it will trigger having to sprinkle the whole building. Mr. Hickey added if the building is out of compliance, the fire marshal will not approve the addition.

Mr. Bourque commented the Board will have wait and see what HL Turner provides. Mr. Hickey indicated they will prepare the cost of renovation and the cost of a new building.

Mr. Bourque asked what other things need to be brought to code. Mr. Proctor indicated a sprinkler system would resolve many issues. He explained currently you are relying on the classrooms being fire separated from the corridor, but based on the current code it is too big for its construction type.

Mr. Bourque commented some of the items' life expectancies were confusing. Mr. Hickey commented that they will go through the report and ensure they are correct. He indicated everything we looked at had been well-maintained to a degree. He noted there is a design issue with the penthouse for the air handlers and the units are 12 inches apart. He indicated no one can get in there to maintain the equipment and it most likely has not been able to be maintained due to its design.

Mr. O'Neill asked if life safety would be the highest priority in terms of the Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Hickey indicated life safety is always first and noted that HL Turner will call out the priorities.

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Mr. Bourque asked when the report will be finalized. Mr. Hickey indicated it will be approximately one month. He offered to meet with the Capital Planning Committee and explain the report and recommendations.

F. Correspondence

Mrs. Harrison commented that correspondence was received from Representative Byron regarding what was contained in the 2018-2019 budgets that were not supported by the House of Representatives.

Mr. Bourque announced that Nate Cooper (CHS teacher), Dave Walsh (LMS PTO President), and Maurissa Fluet (GMS DI Coordinator) will receive the VFW Loyalty Awards on May 5. He congratulated all award recipients.

G. Superintendent's Comments

- 2017-2018 School Board Meeting Calendar Draft

Mr. O'Neill presented a draft meeting calendar to the School Board for input and approval. He commented of the Board provides object codes it would reduce the number of meetings with the Budget Committee.

Mr. York mentioned that he tried to get the Budget Committee to agree to review budgets on one day and to lift the requirement of having all administrators attend to present their budgets. He commented he encouraged them to look at the budget(s) prior to the presentation. He indicated Mr. Cutter will provide an analysis of the budget for the Budget Committee again this year.

Mr. Bourque commented that he made the same suggestion to the Budget Committee last year, but they were not receptive. Mr. York believes they are more willing this year.

Mr. Bourque indicated there is conversation about changing the format this year.

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the 2017-2018 School Board meeting calendar as presented. Mrs. Izbicki seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Mr. O'Neill mentioned that he received a letter from legal counsel regarding HB 329, which pertains to the delayed voting days. He indicated if the bill is approved and the Governor signs it, all elected positions will be confirmed. He explained the bill authorizes governing bodies to legalize all other actions that took place at the district meeting. He added that once the Board ratifies the actions and votes, they must put it in writing and post the resolution.

H. Community Forum

Robin Corbeil, 4 Nesmith Court, asked if schools can help Destination Imagination through fundraisers and publicity for donations. She indicated community support would be beneficial.

Mr. York commented that it would be no different than if the schools raised money for cancer or another non-profit organization. He suggested that the fundraising be handled by the student councils and that principals should drive that.

Janine Anctil, 43 Tanager Way, asked if the building assessment report is available to the public. Mr. Bourque indicated the report is only a draft at this point in time.

Mrs. Anctil asked if air quality was included. Mr. Bourque indicated only structure and mechanical systems. He noted air quality tests are performed on a regular basis.

Mr. Markiewicz commented all three school principals are required to report air quality every year.

Jen Diener, 9 Birch Street, asked if that means air quality is tested at GMS annually. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that principals are required to file a specific report checklist each year.

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Mrs. Diener commented that the district policy states air quality is tested every three years. She indicated the last test at GMS was completed in 2015 and needs to be done this year. Mr. York clarified it would need to be done in 2018.

Mr. O'Neill commented that he has not received any concerns regarding the air quality at GMS.

Mr. Markiewicz noted that policy EBBD does not make any reference to how often air quality testing is done. He indicated it reflects an annual checklist is completed and filed.

Mr. O'Neill asked if there is periodic testing or sampling of air quality performed in each school. He asked if there have been any concerns with the results of the tests that were completed.

Mr. Markiewicz commented that he would have to check with the facility manager and principals. He indicated if remediation were needed it would have been completed.

With reference to Mrs. Diener's question about the frequency of air quality testing, Mrs. Flynn noted that it has been the practice of the district to stagger air quality testing at each school over three years (i.e. GMS one year, LMS the next, CHS the following year).

Mr. O'Neill indicated that a public report will be provided at the next meeting in May.

I. School Board Comments

Mrs. Izbicki explained her comments with regard to motion to provide funding to Destination Imagination. She commented based on having been through the budget process and what is occurring at the state level, not everyone is aware of what is happening behind closed doors. She indicated significant money is being reduced from public education. She noted we are going to have to be conservative about where we put our money during the school day. Mrs. Izbicki commented that she is not opposed to the possibility of leaving the decision to the voters. She encouraged everyone to investigate what is transpiring with education funding that will impact school districts.

(Mrs. Izbicki was excused at 7:00 p.m.)

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Public Minutes:

- March 29, 2017

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the public minutes of March 29, 2017. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

- April 5, 2017

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to approve the public minutes of April 5, 2017. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

- Budget Transfers Mar 2017

Mr. York made a motion to approve the March 2017 budget transfers. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

III. REPORTS

A. Business Administrator's Report

- Snow Removal Services

Mr. Markiewicz reported that Dalton Farms has a three year contract that expires June 30. He has provided exceptional service and always makes the schools a priority. He provided a proposal to extend the contract for an additional three years at the same cost (\$37,000 per year). He noted Board policy allows the Business Administrator to make the recommendation to the Board.

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Mr. Bourque asked if contracts such as these are normally fixed cost per year instead of per storm cost. Mr. Markiewicz indicated most districts do fixed price contracts because it is difficult to budget otherwise. He explained a per storm contract contains many factors such as how many times per storm lots are plowed, cost per inch, which is a lot of work.

Mr. Bourque commented on where the snow piles are placed. He indicated this past year snow piles encroached on parking spaces at the high school, handicap spaces and the portables at GMS.

Mr. Markiewicz indicated the issues were addressed this year and Mr. Dalton will come and move the piles. He noted there will be a fence in front of the portables next year.

Mr. York made a motion to approve a three year contract extension for snow plowing services by Dalton Farms. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

- Monthly Report

The Business Administrator presented the district financial report to the Board. Mr. Markiewicz provided an executive summary that reflected a projection of the unassigned fund balance as if today was the end of the month. He indicated the district should be able to spend ahead for FY18 and still return unassigned funds at the end of the year.

Mr. Bourque commented that he has heard questions regarding why we are thinking of spending ahead if the budget is tight. He indicated the Board is looking at a budget that is \$443,000 less for FY18 and we need to look at prioritizing items. He noted we have to add a grade 3 teacher and increase a part time special education teacher to full time.

Mr. Markiewicz added that the CHS music position was reduced to part time prior to the Board vote to keep the position full time. He commented part of what we are spending ahead is to keep those positions for next year.

Mr. Bourque asked if a list of items to spend ahead has been drafted. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that he provided a list reflecting building projects for which we can spend ahead.

Mr. York asked if the Board will be able to review the contracts for those projects before the end of the year. Mr. Markiewicz commented that it is hoped the projects will be completed before the end of June.

Mr. York commented that contracts have to be approved by the Board in order to encumber end of year funds. Mr. Markiewicz indicated the contracts will be in place.

Mr. Markiewicz reported reductions incorporated into the FY18 budget include a half time music teacher, building appropriations, health insurance and retirement. He indicated that the \$300,000 Budget Committee reduction was added back into the budget for attrition and to accommodate the 3% increases in non-union salaries and postage costs reduced by the Budget Committee. He noted Superintendent recommended changes include an additional grade 3 teacher and increasing a special education teacher from part time to full time. Mr. Markiewicz indicated that spend ahead priority areas include textbook replacement, additional equipment purchases, and furniture replacement.

Mr. York commented these items for next year are not in this year's budget. He noted there is a process by policy and law that has to occur. He indicated the district cannot spend this year's money on items not listed in this year's budget. He commented there has to be a designated amount and contract.

Mr. Markiewicz indicated that the district always follows that procedure.

Mr. Bourque commented we will have the list for the next meeting.

B. Committee Reports

- Budget Committee

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Mr. York reported the Budget Committee met on April 13, 2017. He reported that he attempted to start a conversation regarding budget presentations and reviews with the goal to alleviate the need for all administrators to present their budgets to the Budget Committee.

Mr. York reported they would like to have the default budget earlier and had a brief discussion on revenue projections. He indicated he encouraged them to allow the School Board to handle the budget process and it is up to the Superintendent if he wants to bring in the administrators. He noted based on what he heard at the meeting, they do not want to review the budget line by line.

Mr. Bourque mentioned he heard them talking about parameters. He noted another comment that came up was about the two special education articles that failed and that a comment was made that the School Board should have sent a letter to the HLN. Mr. Bourque indicated that Mrs. Harrison did a great job getting the articles out to the public, the LEA was supportive, Mrs. Izbicki provided a presentation at Deliberative Session and we put article explanations in the HLN. He commented on the School District ballot there were eight articles and six were approved; on the town ballot there were sixteen articles and they were all approved. Mr. Bourque indicated that the Board will push harder next year. He commented that two articles failed only by 30 votes and that should not be attributed to not submitting a letter to the HLN.

- **Wellness Committee**

Mrs. Harrison reported that the Wellness Committee discussed data from the survey, which yielded approximately 300 responses. She indicated the overwhelming theme was improvements in freshness and portion size. Mrs. Lawrence offered to collate the data and look into improving produce selection and freshness by working with local farms. Mrs. Harrison reported each school is currently in the process of a healthy initiative and a chair massage is offered monthly.

Mr. Markiewicz thanked the Wellness Committee for their work on the survey. He indicated that an analysis was prepared regarding where food service has been over the last three years. He reported actual cash sales are currently down 15% at all three schools. He commented the results of the survey provide a goal for the director to work toward. Enrollment and other factors have contributed to the decrease in cash sales.

IV. OLD AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. FY18 Budget

- **FY18 Draft General Fund Approved Budget**

The Board discussed spending ahead on items in the 2017-2018 budget using the FY17 fund balance during the Business Administrator's report.

B. Facilities Use Policy

The existing facility use policy has been revised and updated for consistency in procedures and practices regarding community use of district facilities. The Superintendent requested Board review and discussion on the changes.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mrs. Flynn for her work on the facility use and building access/security policies and working with legal counsel to make the policies consistent and compliant with the law.

Mr. York asked why the changes were made to the facilities policy. Mr. O'Neill indicated there were issues with facility use that required consistency of practices and clarification in language.

Mr. Bourque recommended waiting to review and discuss the policy with the full Board in attendance.

Mr. York commented the Recreation Committee and Town were not charged for facility use in the old policy. Mrs. Flynn indicated that has not changed.

Mr. York asked how that will affect those agencies' use of facilities with the requirement that a staff member has to be in the building. Mrs. Flynn indicated the district will renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the group

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that has access over the winter months without a custodian in the building. She noted the members we provide access permissions for will be vetted prior to receiving their access badges.

Mr. York commented the past Board spent a year on this policy trying to make the process easier for organizations of the town who use our facilities. Mr. Bourque and Mrs. Flynn indicated that is not changing.

Mr. York asked about the requirement for crowd management training. Mr. O'Neill indicated the state is mandating the training and is requiring a fee for the certification. He noted that groups and individuals who use our facilities will not be charged the fee as there is a plan in place to pay for certification for the facilities staff in crowd control management.

The policy will be revisited at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Bourque mentioned that Mr. York sent him an article about a policy that may be mandated to all states.

Mr. York explained that many children in schools either have no money to pay for lunch or there are no lunches left when they get near the end of the lunch line. In these cases, these children are given a less than nutritious lunch. Mr. York indicated that districts have to have a policy in place to rectify this issue by June 30, 2017.

Mr. O'Neill indicated that he and Mrs. Flynn will look into it.

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 MINUTES

A. Approval of Non-Public Minutes:

- March 29, 2017

Mr. York made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of March 29, 2017. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

- April 5, 2017

Mr. York made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of April 5, 2017. Mrs. Harrison seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

VIII. ADJOURN

Mrs. Harrison made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 p.m. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
Administrative Assistant to the School Board