

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

April 8, 2009

(approved as amended 4-22-09)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Vice Chair
Mrs. Cindy Couture, Board Member
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member
Mr. Jason Guerrette, Board Member
Dr. Elaine Cutler, Superintendent
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator
Mrs. Deb Mahoney, Director of Human Resources
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

1) Public Session – Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2) Review and Revision of Agenda

There were no revisions to the agenda.

3) School Board Members' Comments

Mr. Guerrette queried about the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results that were reported in the newspaper. Dr. Cutler indicated that the results were released one day early to Superintendents and are available on the NH DOE website tomorrow.

Mr. Guerrette asked about GMS and LMS results. Dr. Cutler noted that Ms. Lecaroz will be making a presentation on AYP results at the April 22 Curriculum meeting. Dr. Cutler reported that LMS made AYP in Reading and Math, and GMS did not make AYP. She explained that the special education sub-group did not make proficiency in Reading or Math, although the sub-group has improved by 4%. According to the Safe Harbor growth model, the sub-group would have to make a 10% improvement.

Mr. Guerrette had several questions relative to schools in need of improvement and achieving AYP.

Dr. Cutler explained the 2009 AYP Reports are based on the October 2008 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results for Grades 3-8 and 11, together with the 2007-2008 NH-Alternate Assessment results for Grades 2-7 and 10. AYP is calculated through an index system, with schools and districts receiving full credit for each student that scores proficient or better and partial credit for student scores below proficient. To make AYP, a school or district must meet performance targets established for students in reading and math, as well as meet state targets for student participation, attendance, and graduation (at high school). Student performance in the school as a whole is measured, as well as the performance of specific subgroups of students. To comply with the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act that all students demonstrate proficiency by 2013-2014. Schools that do not make AYP are designated as a School In Need of Improvement (SINI).

Mr. Guerrette queried the number of years GMS and LMS have not made AYP. Dr. Cutler indicated that LMS made AYP, but must make AYP two consecutive years to be removed from the schools in need of improvement status. GMS is in the first year of needing improvement in math; however, this will be the fourth year that GMS will be designated a school in need of improvement.

Mr. Boehm pointed out that the State is looking at a different set of students every year.

4) Community Input

There was no community input.

5) New Business

a) Building Committee 2009 Draft Mission Statement

Mr. Miller reviewed the proposed Building Committee 2009 Draft Mission Statement with the Board. Board members discussed the objectives and list of resources provided.

Mrs. Couture explained that when the Building Committee began to regroup in February, she suggested they begin to draft the factual document. She was concerned with the amount of data that has been available to the public and that there is much controversy over what is fact and what is opinion, as was apparent at the Building Committee meeting on March 25. Mrs. Couture felt that the Building Committee created an excellent list of resources and indicated that there are a few more that could be added. She also noted that the Committee planned to include an opinion page in their FAQ report that would be separate from the factual information. Mrs. Couture suggested that instead of including the actual detailed reports with the FAQ report, that a synopsis or executive summary of each could be included, if available, and people can be directed to where to find the detailed resources.

Mr. Guerrette commented that only facts should be reported. He felt that people would read the summaries and not look at the detailed information. The Building Committee is proposing a subsequent document to contain opinion, but the actual factual document will address issues and statement made as fact that were not perceived as originally presented. Mr. Guerrette added that there is still data on the website that is negative. He indicated that not all the information that was presented was factual (e.g. bleaching of walls at GMS: not all walls are bleached).

Mrs. Couture felt that the FAQ report was not an appropriate place for opinion. She is concerned that factual information can become opinion. A complete list of reports/data should be included and people should be directed to it so that they can decide for themselves.

Mr. Guerrette commented that the Building Committee's discussion on current facts indicated that the facts should be up to the point and not future facts.

Mr. Miller suggested that the executive summaries can be reviewed and the public can be led to the detailed information. Mrs. Couture suggested that the list of resources on the prior mission statements can be combined with the list provided on the proposed mission statement.

Mr. Guerrette queried if the square footage required for classrooms is in fact 900 sf. Dr. Cutler indicated that square footage is required for new construction. Existing school approval standards allow alternative square footage with less students in the classroom.

Board members revised the 2009 Building Committee mission statement to read as follows:

Mission:

To develop and gather a list of documents about Griffin Memorial School that contains factual information on the existing state of the facility and systems, including the executive summaries, as well as the full detailed reports.

Objectives:

1. Present how GMS is being maintained and the proper work is being done to keep the building within functional guidelines.
2. Work with the School Board and SAU to make the collection of documents readily accessible online and at specified locations.
3. Work with the School Board to transition these documents to a new committee, which will be responsible for the dissemination of this factual information to the community and press.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the 2009 Building Committee Mission Statement as amended. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

6) Recommended Action

a) Business Affairs

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Minutes April 1, 2009

The draft minutes were tabled to the April 22 meeting.

2) Business Administrator's Report – March 2009

Mr. Martin reviewed the March financial report with the Board. He explained that the enclosed financial report details do not match the Executive Summary analysis. The Executive Summary analysis was manually adjusted to correct for a timing error in running the detailed reports. The eFinancePLUS software uses the current encumbrance amount when the reports are printed for prior period expenditure data. The April 2 payroll was posted to the general ledger prior to running the March 31 YTD budget reports. As a result of the posting, the salary and benefit encumbrance amounts were reduced by the April 2 payroll of approximately \$540,780, thus overstating the amount of available budget at March's end. The correct remaining available budget as of March 31 is approximately \$732,643.

Mr. Martin reported that the FEMA submission for the December ice storm was completed. All documents and back-up material was submitted prior to the due date. The insurance claim for the water damage from the leak at GMS was completed and costs have exceeded \$70,000. In addition to the \$1000 deductible, the District will have to pay for some or all of the asbestos abatement costs, and possibly some upgrade costs (e.g. replacing the damaged carpet with tile). Selectmen have requested a detailed project cost estimate for architectural and engineering fees for the storage project at CHS before approving the use of impact fees. Until that project cost is obtained, the project is on hold.

A preliminary forecast of the salaries and benefits spending has been completed. The salary accounts, excluding self-funded programs which are offset by revenues, will over spend by approximately \$76,000. Major contributing factors are the long-term substitute account and the daily substitute account. The benefit accounts will under spend by approximately \$86,000 and Dental insurance will over spend by approximately \$5,000. The net forecast for salaries and benefits is an under spend of approximately \$5,000. Mr. Martin is forecasting spending close to budget with a current forecasted year-end general fund balance of \$54,000, mostly from unanticipated revenue. This number will change after the April forecast has been completed. He added that he does not expect the year-end under spend to be as large as in the past years.

Mr. Martin reported that it does not appear that Governor Lynch will be releasing any stimulus money for school construction/repairs. The stimulus will most likely be used to make up the shortfall in adequacy grants. He reported that the site plan for the kindergarten portables at GMS has been finalized. Mr. Martin indicated that the technology department has completed the inventory of the contents of the POD at GMS and a list of items is being recommended for disposal. Upon Board approval of the equipment disposition, a date will be scheduled in May for citizens to claim any items they may want prior to final disposal.

Mr. Martin reported that a detailed forecast of the food service revenue will be conducted with a concern that the revenues will be less than expected.

3) GMS Portables Update

Mr. Martin distributed and reviewed a rough sketch of the GMS site plan for the kindergarten portables. The single portable will be placed next to the existing grade 3 portable and will take approximately two feet of the paved play area. The double portable will be placed behind them, next to the playground, with a paved emergency access area between the portables that is required by the fire department. Jersey barriers will be placed between the portables and the playground. The propane tank will be enclosed with a six foot fence and will be placed in the playground at its edge. There will be a gated access opening between the double portable and the propane tank area required by the Town Code Enforcement Officer. Site prep for the propane tank is more expensive than estimated because of the distance to run the pipes. Mr. Martin indicated that he is waiting for final confirmation from Mr. Lynch and Chief Scofield.

Mr. Miller queried if work would begin July 1. Mr. Martin indicated that Hamm Septic and Energy North are scheduled to begin the work running utility and septic lines the first week in July. Paving will begin the second week in July. Schiavi will hopefully set up the portables during the third and fourth weeks of July. Phone lines and other necessary work will be scheduled the first two weeks of August. All work is subject to the delivery of the portables in June and is dependent upon everything going as planned, which is a concern at GMS.

4) Obsolete Technology Equipment

Mr. Martin reviewed the list of technology equipment for disposal with the Board. With the Board's approval, the District will be scheduling an event in May for residents to come and take any items they would like for free.

Mr. Guerrette queried if technology equipment is cycled down to each school upon replacement. Mr. Martin indicated that technology equipment moves between schools and the overflow of obsolete equipment is disposed. Mr. Guerrette was concerned about information left on the hard drives. Mr. Martin noted that all hard drives are reformatted and no information is left to access.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the disposition of obsolete technology equipment as presented. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

5) FY10 Salary Ranges & Schedules Approval

Mrs. Mahoney distributed the proposed salaries for 2009-2010. Dr. Cutler reviewed the increases that were previously proposed and approved in the FY10 operating budget. The budget approved by the voters included a 4% increase for non-LEA employees, however, the recommendation before the Board is for a 3% increase. Mrs. Mahoney reviewed the proposed salary increase indicating that the recommended salary increases are as follows:

- 3% increase for all employees that are not on ranges or schedules;
- 2% adjustment to ranges with 1% movement in the range for salaries employees on a range;
- 0% adjustment and 3% movement for employees on a schedule.

The increases are based on satisfactory review and evaluation of employees. The teachers' contract was voted down and will be renegotiated. The total estimated reduction of the FY10 proposed salary increases is \$29,580.

Mr. Guerrette queried about movement in schedules and ranges in relation to performance. Mrs. Mahoney indicated that upon satisfactory review/evaluation, employees move up one step. Dr. Cutler explained that reviews have a performance scale of 1-5, with 5 being outstanding. Employees that receive an overall satisfactory review will move up in salary. Mr. Guerrette commented that there is no incentive for an employee to do an outstanding job. Dr. Cutler indicated that by compensating employees fairly you avoid unionizing. Mr. Guerrette did not agree. He commented that scheduled employees, such as custodians, are paid higher wages than in the private sector. Dr. Cutler clarified that there is a difference between custodians who clean an office building and those who clean up after 700 students each day. Mr. Martin indicated that custodians that work at night clean up while there are students or public in the building and are very good at their jobs.

Mrs. Mahoney reviewed the proposed rates for substitutes. The current pay scale is as follows

- Daily substitutes - \$60 per day and \$70 per day once they have worked 40 days.
- Daily nurse substitutes - \$90 per day.
- Long-term substitutes - \$178.02 per day, the lowest step of the teachers pay schedule.
- Custodial substitutes - \$10 per hour.
- Monitor substitutes - \$10.82 per hour, which we are proposing to change to \$10.00 per hour.
- Food Service substitutes - \$8.50 per hour.
- Tutors - \$25 per hour and must be certified as a teacher.
- Summer custodial substitutes - \$10.75 per hour.
- Fall/spring grounds support - \$11.75 per hour.
- Teachers – extra days/hours – paid daily rate or pro-rated hourly based on current rate.

Mrs. Mahoney indicated that this will be effective for the FY10 school year.

Mr. Guerrette queried about a salary analysis. Mrs. Mahoney noted that data has been collected from other school districts to arrive at these averages.

Mrs. Mahoney reviewed administrative personnel ranges proposing a 2% adjustment to the ranges and a 1% movement within the range upon satisfactory evaluation. She mentioned that the only two salary ranges not set were for the Director of Guidance and the Director of High School Athletics as there was not enough information at the time the other administrative ranges were set.

Mr. Guerrette asked if it were possible for an administrative employee to get an unsatisfactory evaluation and still get the 2% adjustment to the range. Mr. Martin indicated that the range would be adjusted, but the employee would not move within that range. Mr. Guerrette expressed his disagreement with the rationale.

Mrs. Mahoney continued to review the recommended FY10 salaries. She indicated that the proposed increases for Facility managers and Grounds coordinator is a 2% adjustment to the range with a 1% movement within the range; all employees on a schedule (custodians, food service workers, administrative assistants, paraprofessionals, and SAU staff) would receive 0% adjustment and 3% movement.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve a 3% step increase for employees on a step schedule, a 2% increase in the range and a 1% movement within the range for administrators, site facility managers, and grounds coordinator, and a 3% increase for salaried employees and other employees not on a range or schedule. Mr. Boehm seconded.

Mr. Guerrette queried about longevity. Mrs. Mahoney indicated that longevity has not changed since last year. Mr. Guerrette expressed his concerns with the way of work of the employee review/evaluation process in relation to salary increases.

Mr. Miller indicated that he was going to suggest a 2% increase for employees and a 1% adjustment to the administrative ranges with a 1% movement within the range. Mr. Martin indicated that the problem with the suggestion was that there will be no step increases and there would be no step increases in the default budget. He pointed out that the Budget Committee has always supported steps.

Dr. Cutler commented that she had spoken with her peer group and neighboring districts have proposed a 3% increase for all employees. She cautioned that if the district does not keep up with neighboring districts, there is a risk of losing employees to other districts for a small difference in salary. Mr. Guerrette disagreed indicating that compared to other districts Litchfield employees are better compensated and in a better environment. Dr. Cutler indicated that Mr. Guerrette's value system may not be the same as the employees' value system. Mr. Boehm commented that the Department of Labor statistics indicate that state/local government employees received 3% increases. He noted that Litchfield has good employees and we should try to keep them.

Mr. Miller indicated that there was a motion on the table.

The motion carried 3-2-0, with Mr. Guerrette and Mrs. Jewett voting in the negative.

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to approve a 2% across the board with no movement in the ranges or schedules. Mr. Guerrette seconded. The motion failed 2-3-0, with Mr. Miller, Mrs. Couture, and Mr. Boehm voting in the negative.

Dr. Cutler indicated that an updated salary survey would be completed this year. Mr. Guerrette felt that there should be a different system in place to reward good employees. Dr. Cutler noted that there is a host of merit pay for teachers and people across the country have attempted this vehicle, but it has not been successful. Mrs. Couture pointed out that in the past employees who go above and beyond were rewarded with a stipend, which was not part of their salary.

6) Manifest

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

Mr. Guerrette queried about a wireless scanner for CHS for a cost of \$1866. Mr. Martin indicated that this was a wireless scanner for the Library that would be shared between the three schools. The item is needed for software management of library stock. Mr. Boehm indicated that the Board previously asked for the volume of book distribution in the library and software management is necessary for this task.

7) **Old Business**

1) **Policies: 1st Reading**

a) Financial Management Plan (DA)

Minor revisions were made to the policy.

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve Policy DA for a 1st Reading as amended. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

After discussion of Policy DBC, the Board revised Policy DA to include the following statement after the first paragraph: *The Board understands that achieving this is dependent upon the financial ability of the District.*

Mrs. Couture made a motion to reconsider the amendment to Policy DA. Mr. Guerrette seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

b) Annual Budget (DB)

Mr. Martin suggested clarification of the last sentence of the policy. A revision was made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DB for a 1st Reading as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

After discussion of Policy DBC, the Board revised Policy DB to add the following wording to the first sentence: *“...understanding that achieving this is dependent on the financial ability of the District.”*

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to reconsider and include the revised wording in Policy DB. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

c) Budget Preparation (DBC)

Board members discussed the last revision to the policy and removed the revision.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DBC for a 1st Reading as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

d) Budget Implementation (DBI)

No revisions were made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DBI for a 1st Reading. Mr. Guerrette seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

e) Taxing & Borrowing Authority & Limitations (DC)

No revisions were made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DC for a 1st Reading. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

f) Funding Proposals & Applications (DD)

No revisions were made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DD for a 1st Reading. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

g) Audits (DIE)

No revisions were made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DIE for a 1st Reading. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

h) Sales Calls & Demonstrations (DJGA)

No revisions were made to the policy.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve Policy DJGA for a 1st Reading. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

2) Job Descriptions

a) Director of Special Services

Dr. Cutler reviewed the job description with Dr. Gregg and Mrs. Mahoney. Board members reviewed the job description and no revisions were suggested.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the Director of Special Services job description. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

8) Community Input

There was no community input.

9) Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3II (a-c)

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

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to go into non-public session at 9:14 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. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, yes.

10) Return to Public Session

Mr. Guerrette made a motion to return to public session at 10:06 p.m. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried by roll call: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes; Mr. Guerrette, yes.

11) Adjourn

Mrs. Jewett made a motion to adjourn at 10:07 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

12) Upcoming Meetings

>Litchfield School Board: April 22, 2009 - CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM

>**PLEASE NOTE:** Litchfield School Board Meetings for May 2009 - May 6 will be the Business Meeting; May 13 will be the Policy Session; May 20 will be the Curriculum Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Administrative Assistant