

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

January 9, 2008

(approved as amended 1-23-08)

Present:

Mr. Dennis Miller, Chair
Mrs. Cindy Couture, Vice Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Board Member
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Board Member
Mrs. Dot Beauregard, Board Member
Dr. Elaine Cutler, Interim Superintendent
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Secretary

1) Public Session – Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. Mr. Miller announced that the live broadcast was not working at this time, but the meeting is being recorded.

2) Review and Revision of Agenda

There were no revisions to the agenda.

3) School Board Members' Comments

Mrs. Couture fixed the broadcast problem and the meeting is being broadcast live, as well as being recorded.

Mr. Boehm was concerned about the policies on Wellness and cell phone usage. [Rules and/or regulations regarding cell phone usage in Litchfield schools are located in the student/parent handbook.] Regarding the Wellness policy, Mr. Boehm was concerned about teachers taking food away from students in school. He also was concerned with teachers taking cell phones away from students before school begins.

Mrs. Couture indicated that students are allowed to use their cell phones before and after school.

Mr. Miller announced that the Board will receive a CHS traffic update on January 23. Mrs. Couture felt that they have been waiting too long for a meeting to be held with the NRPC regarding the CHS Traffic Study and indicated that people in the community are complaining about the problem.

4) Recommended Action

a) Business Affairs

1) Draft School Board Minutes:

a) Public Minutes of December 12, 2008

Revisions to the minutes included: under Recommended Action, Acceptance of Gift: the last sentence in the item was amended to reflect, 'Mrs. Beauregard reported that the SAU and LMS have been working with the Nashua Boys/Girls Club, who is going to donate physical activity time.'; under Impact Fees: the deletion of transcription notes.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

b) Public Minutes of December 19, 2008

Revisions to the minutes included: under Recommended Action, Draft Warrant Articles: the first sentence of the last paragraph will reflect that ‘Mr. Martin informed the Board that the Special Education Out-of-District tuition account is currently over-encumbered....’

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- 2) Final Approval FY09 MS-27 School Board Budget

Mr. Boehm made a motion to approve the FY09 MS-27 School Board Operating Budget @ \$20,195,992 for appropriation. Mrs. Jewett seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the FY09 MS-27 Warrant Articles @ \$22,801,125. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- 3) Final Approval FY09 Default Budget

Mrs. Couture made a motion to approve the FY09 Default Budget at \$19,825,556. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0

- 4) Tentative Approval Warrant Articles

Mr. Boehm queried about a previously drafted warrant article regarding rescinding high school bus fees. Mrs. Couture indicated that all Board members were in favor of rescinding it, but felt it was not the right time to bring the article forth. Mr. Boehm suggested that students that don’t have a pass and can still ride the bus (in case of emergency or when they don’t usually take bus, but may have to) should be issued a temporary pass. Dr. Cutler indicated that Mr. Manseau, CHS Principal, should handle the problem. Mr. Martin offered to work out a solution with Mr. Manseau.

Mr. Miller commented about placing the vote to recommend or not recommend an article on the warrant. Mr. Martin indicated that legal counsel advised that the Board can opt to place such votes on the warrant, however, legal counsel felt the RSA was not clear. The Board was in agreement of placing the vote of each article on the warrant.

Mr. Boehm made a motion to recommend the 2008 Warrant Articles, subject to legal and DRA review, as well as any revisions or additions. Mrs. Couture seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

- 5) Business Administrator’s Report – December 2008

Mr. Martin reported that the District has received the 2007 audit report. He also reported that a three year contract with SunGard Pentamation had been signed. The first meeting of the new software implementation team on will be held on January 24. Mrs. Mahoney and Mr. Martin met with an outside vendor to discuss the possibility of contracting with that vendor to handle the District’s 403b plans. Mr. Martin also reported that a preliminary building aid application and associated documents were hand-delivered to NH DOE on December 27. In Building & Grounds, Honeywell was unable to get delivery of the equipment for the CHS chimney in time to install it over the school vacation, but it will be completed as soon as the equipment is delivered. In Technology, the new wireless labs were used to successfully complete the MAPs testing at GMS and LMS.

- 6) Manifest

In the Chief Accountant’s absence, the manifest was not completed in time for the Board meeting. Mr. Martin asked Board members to come to the SAU office to sign the manifest when ready.

5) **Presentations to the Board**

>>>Superintendent Search: Ted Comstock, NHSBA Executive Director

Mr. Comstock thanked the Board for inviting him to speak. He recognized Mrs. Couture and thanked her for all her work on the NHSBA Board of Directors.

Mr. Comstock spoke to the Board about searching for a Superintendent. He commented on how things have changed over the past seven years in such searches and how the depth of the candidate pools has shrunk since then. He indicated that the most important stage is garnering a pool of candidates and noted that has been a challenge.

Mr. Comstock explained that he provided the Board with a booklet outlining the NHSBA search process. He indicated that the NHSBA advertised for candidates and usually netted 20-25 candidates in the past. However, since the pool has decreased it is more likely they will net 10 candidates. He noted that it is a challenge to get well qualified individuals. He suggested that it is always a good idea to consider insiders.

Mr. Comstock mentioned that the NHSBA has an active recruitment network and advertises nationally. They also make use of informal networking. The timeline is 6-8 weeks after which we hope to garner candidates. The next steps are as follows: the screening process by the School Board or a search committee whose job it is to narrow the field of candidates using Board criteria; a round of semi-finalist interviews with a search committee; bring the candidates in for visitations; finalist interview and selection. The process takes approximately 4-5 months. He added that the process can be expedited and customized, but the most important part is recruitment of candidates.

Mr. Comstock explained that there are several searches going on statewide at this time – Manchester, Mascenic, Exeter, Sunapee, Raymond, Hollis-Brookline. He commented that the Board needs to consider what is the right fit for the District. He added that it is always risky when you hire new people.

Mrs. Jewett asked how many districts that are Litchfield's size are looking for a Superintendent at this time. Mr. Comstock indicated that there are at least six or seven and that because of the labor market many districts were forced to reopen their search. Mr. Martin mentioned that 31 districts in Massachusetts are searching for Superintendents.

Mr. Boehm queried if it is harder for single districts to find candidates than for larger and cooperative districts. Mr. Comstock indicated that generally a single district SAU is ideal for attracting a Superintendent, but there can be unique challenges that do not make them as attractive as larger or multi-district SAUs.

Mr. Boehm asked if it was common to find that Superintendents want to upgrade from smaller districts to larger districts. Mr. Comstock indicated that it depends on the pool. He explained that pools are populated with people who are not Superintendents (like principals who want to begin with a smaller district and then move up to a larger one), others are Superintendents who have not found their fit, some are perennial candidates who apply for something every year, and others are those that are toward the end of their careers and are looking for a smaller district.

Mr. Miller queried about the cost of the search. Mr. Comstock indicated that the NHSBA professional fee is \$8,000. Additional costs for advertising and traveling bring the average cost to approximately \$12,000.

Mr. Miller asked if more people are making the jump from principal to Superintendent. Mr. Comstock noted that there are many different candidates with different reasons. He explained that although the NHSBA prides itself in doing national searches, the finalists usually come from New England. He added that another part of the process is timing because most of the candidates you want to look at are employed and have to give their employer 4-5 months notice. Mr. Comstock encouraged the Board to explore all options and, if considering a search, this is the time to perform one.

Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Comstock for taking the time to come to Litchfield to speak with the Board.

Student Representative Comments

Michael Clark reported that the Student Council is planning a fundraiser called 'Oscar Night'. He explained that students submit videos that are screened and voted on in March. The Council is holding new elections for three vacant positions, rewriting their bylaws, and running the LEA carnation sale at CHS. Mrs. Jewett queried the need for the fundraisers. Mr. Clark indicated that the Student Council will host Springfest and would like to have activities for class members, as well as providing a year end activity, for which they need to raise money. Mr. Clark also commented on previous comments made by Mr. Boehm regarding cell phones at CHS and the Wellness

policy noting that the cell phone regulation has been enforced this year and many students still bring food into the building.

6) Old Business

1) Communication Plan: Public Information

Dr. Cutler reported that Mr. Miller and Ms. Caprioglio worked on an agenda for the January 16 Information Meeting. She also mentioned that Mr. Miller is working on a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting as well. She added that at the meeting, community members who attend should be asked if they are interested in helping collect signatures to support the proposed new school, put a sign on their property, or host a meeting.

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

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

Mr. Boehm made a motion to go into non-public session at 6:38 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. Jewett seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

8) Return to Public Session

Mrs. Couture made a motion to return to public session at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Boehm seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote: Mr. Miller, yes; Mrs. Couture, yes; Mrs. Beauregard, yes; Mr. Boehm, yes; Mrs. Jewett, yes.

9) Adjourn

Mrs. Couture made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 p.m. Mrs. Beauregard seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

10) Upcoming Meetings

>Litchfield School Board: January 23, 2008 - CHS Media Room - 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn
School Board Secretary