

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

School Board Meeting

SAU Office

7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Richard Dunning,
Bernd Foecking, Jim Fredrickson,
Janine Lesser, Niki McGettigan,
Stephan Morrissey, Linda Quintanilha,
Kristen Reilly, Pierce Rigrod,
Crista Salamy, Myron Steere,
Jerome Wilson

Molly Janoch, Student Rep.
Marina McMahon, Student Rep.
Asher MacLeod, CVEA Rep.

ADMINISTRATION

Kimberly Saunders, Supt.	Larry Pimental, PES
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.	Colleen Roy, GES
Mindy Ryan, B.A.	Amy Janoch, HES
Brian Grattan, Tech.	Kathie Morrocco, Pierce
Stephanie Syre-Hager, AES	Jen Kiley, ATC
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.	Nicole Pease, DCS
Jim Elder, GBS	Gib West, CVHS
Anne O'Bryant, SMS	Michelle Voto, CVHS
Tim Conway, SMS	Michael Lucow, CVHS
Kat Foecking, FES	
Fabiola Woods, TES	
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.	

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Myron Steere called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes (Board Vote Required)

a. November 27, 2018

Stephan Morrissey moved to accept the minutes of November 27, 2018. Dick Dunning second. Crista Salamy, Linda Quintanilha, and Kristen Reilly abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.

b. December 4, 2018

Stephan Morrissey moved to accept the minutes of December 4, 2018. Dick Dunning second. Bernd Foecking and Crista Salamy abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.

Myron Steere asked that the Superintendent's Report move before old business. Agreed. (see notes under agenda item six (6)).

3. Points of Pride

Kimberly Saunders shared various Points of Pride as reported to her by administrators.

4. Public Comment

Corey Boyd, Dublin, spoke about the focus on consolidation by the board. She said that focus should be on the students that these decisions impact. Ms. Boyd asked the board to think about the principles that this district was founded on. She asked for clear and concise information to come forward to the voters.

Elizabeth Swan, Temple, spoke about consolidation stating that she moved to the area for a small town feel. She cited what she believed to be the benefits of small schools. Regarding the surcharge, she believed it divides the communities.

Chris Mack, Temple, reported moving here from Nashua and spoke about the time that an elementary school student would travel on a bus as unacceptable. She believed that children benefit from a small school.

Erin Nolan, Peterborough, said that she requests that her children attend DCS every year because she feels strongly about the small schools. She understands the frustration over the cost of education. Considering shuttering elementary schools should not be a focus. She agreed that something needs to be done. She is open to seeing information that supports the benefit to what is proposed.

Cindy Connolly, Temple, recently formed a PTT Program. Many tell her if the school closes, they will move. Losing valuable people in communities who volunteer for the fire department is possible as a result should TES close. Where do we stand as a district with regard to the inadequate funding from the State of NH? She asked why we aren't pushing back against the State on this issue to adequately fund education. Are we joining forces? Lawsuits are under consideration, why isn't ConVal joining?

Danny Boltmeir, Temple, said that he purchased a home in Temple for reasons of size and the arts interest in the area. It is easy to get lost in a large classroom. He hopes that a decision will be made based on research.

5. Consent Agenda

a. Personnel

1) 2018-2019 Nomination

The nomination of James Clough, CVES Physical Ed/Health Teacher came before the board.

Stephan Morrissey moved to accept the nomination as read. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

6. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Monthly Events Calendar

A School Board meeting was added on Thursday, January 3rd at 7:00 p.m. at the SAU Office.

The ATC Committee will not meet on January 10th. They will attend the "Celebration of Learning" at CVHS instead.

A policy subcommittee of the Education Committee will meet on January 28th at 4:00 at the SAU.

b. ESSA designations – Ann Forrest, Assistant Superintendent

Tabled until January 8th.

c. Sabbatical Recommendation

Kimberly Saunders referenced a sabbatical request and recommendation. Kimberly recommended a request for sabbatical from Krystal Morin.

Stephan Morrissey moved to approve the request for sabbatical.

Dick Dunning asked about the reference to move toward a Master's Degree. His concern is that if we have denied others in the past, would this open up Pandora's Box for others to pursue a degree?

Kimberly said that this was taken under consideration. Katelyn Purrington, PD Committee Chair, wrote that the way that this program was designed is focused on the experience and design and not receipt of a Master's Program.

Dick Dunning asked if this opened the door to pursue a Master's. If he was denied in the past, would it not be the same to do in the future? He cautioned opening the door. He is not opposed to this request.

Kimberly said that the PD Committee developed clear criteria when considering this request. This program only accepts four students each year. It is particularly rigorous. The Master's is a by-product of the experience. As long as the committee applied the same criteria, we would be fine. It is half-pay for a full year.

Kimberly said that the board could send Kimberly back for clarification of the criteria should another request come forward. Dick said that he did not want to do that.

Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

d. Board Requests

Kimberly reminded the Board that the SAU has received requests from individual board members. We have a mechanism to send board requests through the board request email. It allows the Superintendent to send the request to the appropriate SAU employee. Please do not send your request to an individual employee; use the board request email to make requests.

7. Reports

a. Student Representative - Molly Janoch/Marina McMahon

Molly Janoch and Marina McMahon reported that CV Interact finished their annual food drive. National Honor Society is starting a clothing drive soon.

b. Teacher Representative – Asher MacLeod

Asher MacLeod reported that tomorrow, the high school holiday concert will take place. In addition, the CVEA is working on communication with the community. Lastly, TES is having a door decorating contest.

c. Budget & Property Committee – Jim Fredrickson

Jim Fredrickson reported that a brief discussion on solar energy took place at the most recent meeting. No action to schedule a meeting had taken place on this topic.

Most of time, at the meeting, was spent talking about Version 4 of the budget and the default budget.

Final numbers for the high school science project results in a \$645K savings. What it means is that less will be pulled from the trust fund.

d. Communications Committee – Janine Lesser

Janine Lesser reported that edits to the white paper discussion of the tax bill explanation were worked on. In preparation for deliberative session in February and the March vote, a pamphlet will be mailed to everyone and will be available in town offices and libraries.

A small group will meet with the Superintendent on the default budget.

The Monadnock Ledger Transcript and The Villager will be communicating exciting things happening in the district.

Discussion on the State funding issue took place as well. A goal to assure legislators keep funding education is front and center.

e. ATC Committee – Stephan Morrissey

Stephan Morrissey reported that the State Report was discussed at the last meeting. Roll out of Nashua Community College is underway, effective January, with limited course offerings.

f. Education Committee – Crista Salamy

Crista Salamy reported an update on multi-age at DCS was shared. Grades 3, 4, and 5 are in the collaboration. Positives were shared; co-planning, curriculum focus for staff is a strength, more time in the classroom as a result of less professional development. Challenges include the restriction of time and scheduling. More planning time is needed; only able to meet once a week.

A report out on what inclusion looks like in the CV District was shared. An update on Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) was shared. Getting students ready to learn is a focus. Nationally, 25% of students come to school ready to learn.

A review of the *Director of School Counseling* job description took place. Further review is needed.

At the meeting, Cari Coates reported that a change in the job description was proposed. The position currently covers grades 9-12 and is proposed to cover K-12 in an effort to provide consistency in the delivery of service. In addition, having input into staff evaluation for counselors to provide consistency and a consistent level of support was a discussion point. District responsibilities and high school responsibilities were broken out. The added piece was the addition of support for evaluations and presence in the schools.

8. Old Business

a. Updated Operating Budget Versions– Mindy Ryan

Mindy Ryan reported Version 4 of the budget reflects a decrease in high school renovations and flooring.

Version 4 reflects an increase of \$840K; the operating budget is up 1.87%. The Dublin Consolidated School boiler is in the budget now but may be considered for a separate warrant article.

Pierce Rigrod asked if there are other capital items in the operating budget that could be pulled from capital reserves. We should look for other capital items for consideration.

Rich Cahoon said that changes to the capital plan are only in this year.

Kimberly Saunders reported that the Great Brook School parking lot is in the budget. HVAC systems, doors at SMS and the SAU are in the budget. They are absolutely necessary. If a warrant article is voted down, the work cannot be done regardless of how it would be paid for. Door work are security concerns. HVAC at Peterborough Elementary School needs to be completed.

Pierce Rigrod said that he was not proposing warrants, he was proposing using capital reserves to keep the budget down.

Has line 211, health insurance, been adjusted? It is 2.2% in the proposed budget.

Line 738 – replacement equipment – what is in this line? Replacement chrome books, laptops, etc. In line with the technology plan.

Line 650 – software support has a 15.58% increase. Recurring software licensing with a three-year term are up for renewal. Enterprise software typically sees a 5% yearly increase.

Line 656 - What is gas/diesel used for? Propane, diesel, gasoline, and other fuel. We pay the propane for buses. Labeling this line gas/diesel/propane was suggested.

\$1.8M is proposed for spending on capital expenditures in 20/21.

Version 4 sits at \$550K for capital expenditures in 19/20.

b. Proposed Warrant for Consolidation – Stephan Morrissey

Stephan Morrissey shared his response to a letter he received about a proposed warrant for consolidation.

Mr. Morrissey read his proposed Warrant Article as follows:

The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Effective July 1, 2020 Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, and Peterborough. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board. (This change would result in closure of elementary schools in Dublin and Temple.)

Stephan Morrissey moved to submit his proposed Warrant Article as read. Dick Dunning second.

Pierce Rigrod said that we started this discussion years ago. Six months ago, the Strategic Plan had a goal to bring forward a consolidation plan, one that would go from concept to implementation. The board wandered in its focus for several months. There is a sense from some members of this board to do something and bring something forward to the voters. We are putting ourselves in a position of not having some information to defend this proposal. Mr. Rigrod said that he feels this is premature and will likely face a lot of scrutiny.

Bernd Foecking said that it is not a good plan and that it is dividing the school district. It seems to single out several schools. He said that he would expect other warrants to be proposed in the future to close additional schools.

Niki McGettigan supported that choosing two towns based on lower numbers is wrong. She asked that consideration for the actual cost to run a school be considered. We probably need to look at a different ConVal. She spoke about what has changed over the years. The State has required schools to offer

specifics which has added costs without support from them. In any year, we could find a school that costs more than another. She said that we have to pay our fair share. She said that "We Are ConVal".

Jim Fredrickson said that he too felt this premature; likely motivated to do something. He needs to see numbers.

The board decided to hold off on a vote until after the other proposed warrants are discussed.

c. Proposed Warrant for Consolidation – Janine Lesser

Janine Lesser said that the reality is that we are asking administration to stretch thinner and thinner. Everyone is doing a great job. State funding has dropped to a low. We are doing what we can. She urged those present to reach out to legislators.

Ms. Lesser read a proposed Warrant of hers as follows:

Shall we amend the Contoocook Valley School District Articles of Agreement, Article #5, line six, currently reading "Elementary schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple" to read "Elementary schools may be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple"; and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 to examine the components and results of the 'consolidation plan' to a new configuration of two Pre-K-3 lower elementary schools, one 4-6 upper elementary school, and one 7-12 junior high-high school.

While New Hampshire retains its high quality of life and first in the nation status in family income and child outcomes, the fallout from the national trends in wealth and opportunity gap and drug crisis are becoming more apparent in our communities. Although the past year has seen a modest increase in the number of 20 & 30 year olds moving in to NH, rural life continues to lose services and general, specifically young, population. Several results of this reality are causing increases in the district budget that can no longer be met by budget cuts. The equity of the distribution of services are affected by the increasing pressure on providing services across 11 schools, for a student population that brings more significant needs to the school doors, and state and federal regulations that require more and more attention and money from our budget, administration and teachers. We are gifted with unsurpassable talent in our administrators and teachers, it is time to take the initiative in identifying the education that will take our region's children well-prepared in to the future. To insist on the status quo is to sell our children, and the future of our communities, down the river to an unknown.

Janine said that her proposal is to allocate a sum of \$25K to examine the components and results of the consolidation plan to a new configuration. There has been a struggle for years to decide what the district should look like. She said that a consultant should be hired to do this work. She places consolidation back on the table with a study.

Myron Steere said that he thought that \$25K would be low to conduct this work. Kimberly Saunders agreed; she could work to come up with a more solid number.

\$75K was suggested.

Rich Cahoon said that there is no information about sending grades 7 and 8 to the high school.

Stephan Morrissey said that the public can put forth a warrant article and they can say anything in it. He proposes the year 2020 in his warrant, which allows time to study. If voted in favor, we will know the plan. He said that financially and educationally, we are being forced in this direction. In the end, it will be the taxpayers that will decide. This requires a 2/3's majority vote to pass. Demographics of some of our towns continue to deteriorate.

Bernd Foecking said that closing only two elementary schools will not make a difference. We don't know how much we will save. If we succeed with this warrant article it will continue in years to come. He suggested developing it further. Let the voters decide then.

Crista Salamy said that if it passes, that is what will happen because it was voted. We cannot back track after a vote to further study if the voters vote in favor.

Janine Lesser proposed that a consolidation warrant to the five school model by 2021 move forward to allow a study so that we can inform people.

Rich Cahoon said that to keep everything procedurally straight, we need to know the exact wording of the model.

d. Funding Formula/Surcharge

A confidential legal opinion was referred to. Page 3 of 3 was referenced.

Rich Cahoon shared tax information on two houses in the ConVal District; one valued at \$267,400 and one at \$271,000. They are on the same road; one is located in Peterborough and pays \$4,478 to ConVal for the education portion in taxes. The second is located in Hancock and pays \$3,300 to ConVal for education. He said that the community is divided already. Two houses in the neighborhood paying these taxes in not equitable. Charging a surcharge was meant to bring equity.

Pierce Rigrod said that the former Business Administrator reported that the current funding formula is equitable. The bigger point is that we are a district together. We entered into this agreement over 30 years ago. As a district, we should look at it as a benefit to the district. Adequacy is part of the deal. There are different equalized valuations by community that has an impact.

Rich Cahoon said that Niki McGettigan said that this is one district. Some have said that we are asking people to unfairly pay more. He is asking that people pay closer to the same amount as another. Why does one home pay \$1,100 more than another, 200 yards apart, in two towns?

Kimberly Saunders said that this is a very different exploration than the administration has been asked before. Equalizing valuation across the nine towns is outside the Articles of Agreement. We will need the DRA, select boards, and legal on board for this discussion to approach the problem that is trying to be solved. Kimberly said that she needs to know if legal should prepare a written formal opinion and draft the article. Or, are we done pursuing this avenue?

She asked the board to consider this and reminded them that January 8th is the last date to put together the warrant.

Bernd Foecking motioned not to pursue a funding formula change. Niki McGettigan second. Table other motions.

Rich Cahoon has heard why should my kids have to go to school with a class of 20 students (during the Public Comment session tonight)? He said that his children already do.

Why should the towns with the largest class sizes pay the highest rate? They do now. Equity is measured in two ways. He does not believe that 10 students is the best; if it were, why don't we see it implemented across the district. Peterborough is paying substantially larger than Dublin and has larger classes.

Niki McGettigan said that some small classes are combined classes to actually form 20 in a class.

Rich said administration is trying to work within a responsible budget. They have not determined what varying class sizes are from one year to the next. When it doesn't fluctuate evenly, it isn't fair. When people want to keep the small schools open there has to be a formula change.

Stephan Morrissey said that multi-class levels are said to be healthy when they are consistently applied rather than bouncing it around from one year to the next. A fixed plan is healthier for education. We have been doing it out of necessity.

Pierce Rigrod said that we have discussed demographics and housing. There are towns that had mills and had a lot of housing clustered together. We have communities that are naturally spread out. The district was formed with this understanding that the towns were different. Enrollments are down across the district. The idea is that we are talking about opportunity cost. We are thinning too much. It is an interesting concept to equalize payments to the value. He would argue that he has paid off the cost of the schools when the funding formula was changed.

Rich said that he would love to see as many people as are present tonight show up at their town zoning meetings and encourage change to encourage growth. There is a funding inequity currently with an easy

fix to change the formula numbers. If we are going to keep eight elementary schools open, we need to talk about funding.

Dick Dunning said that he does not see support of the school budget from one year to the next in some towns. We turn to a default budget when the proposed budget fails. We need to do something that will affect the overall cost of running the school district. This is a personnel issue. Unless addressed in an equitable way, schools will be closed. We need to address the cost to support education and we need the communities to support it. People recognize the differences in funding schools. Peterborough feels that they are carrying the burden of funding the small schools.

Stephan Morrissey said that there is a concern that the proposed budget, although lean, is going to further increase assessments in the towns. These result in huge increases in taxes in some towns. Those towns may keep the budget from passing. A default will hurt kids.

Janine Lesser said that rather than talk about closing schools, she is looking at a new model. Kimberly suggested that a three to five-year phase in plan for such a change would be needed.

Janine Lesser moved that an article be placed on the warrant that the ConVal School District be reconfigured, in phases, to a five school model, two elementary schools Pre-K-3; two middle schools 4-6; and one junior high/high school, to be completed by 2021.

Stephan Morrissey reread his article as follows:

The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Effective July 1, 2020 Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, and Peterborough. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board. (This change would result in closure of elementary schools in Dublin and Temple.)

A roll call vote to place Stephan's proposal on the warrant was taken.

In favor: Jerry Wilson, Stephan Morrissey, Dick Dunning

Opposed: Rich Cahoon, Linda Quintanilha, Bernd Foecking, Janine Lesser, Crista Salmay, Pierce Rigrod, Kristen Reilly, Niki McGettigan, Jim Fredrickson.

Motion failed.

Janine Lesser re-read her proposal to be placed on the warrant:

Janine Lesser moved that an article be placed on the warrant that the ConVal School District be reconfigured, in phases, to a five school model, two elementary schools Pre-K-3; two middle schools 4-6; and one junior high/high school, to be completed by 2021.

In favor: Jerome Wilson, Janine Lesser, Stephan Morrissey, Kristen Reilly, Jim Fredrickson, Dick Dunning, Bernd Foecking

Opposed: Rich Cahoon, Crista Salmay, Pierce Rigrod, Niki McGettigan, Linda Quintanilha
Motion carried.

Rich Cahoon moved that if in light of what is in the folders (confidential) to not consider a surcharge.

In favor of moving forward with a surcharge: Jerome Wilson, Stephan Morrissey, Dick Dunning, Jim Fredrickson, Rich Cahoon, Crista Salmay

Opposed to a surcharge: Linda Quintanilha, Bernd Foecking Janine Lesser, Pierce Rigrod, Niki McGettigan, Kristen Reilly.

As a result of the 6-6 tie, Myron Steere cast the tie-breaking vote in favor of a surcharge.

Rich Cahoon moved that we refer to the spread sheet that David Jack previously provided with 40% Average Daily Membership (ADM) and 60% Equalized Valuation (EV) for a funding formula only if we do not move forward with surcharge. Dick Dunning second.

As a result, towns with higher EV would pay more

Rich Cahoon moved to table this discussion until after non-public session. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Kimberly Saunders recommended that the board does not have enough time and recommended a special meeting on either January 2, 3, or 4th to finalize the warrant.

A board meeting on January 3rd was decided at 7:00 p.m. at the SAU.

e. Other Warrant Articles

No interest in placing specific warrant articles for capital expenditures was discussed.

Single Tier Busing to allow one start time for all schools is proposed. It would put everyone starting at the same time. It gauges interest. Where does single tier fall on the long term list against universal preschool and other items? Kimberly said that she will get a dollar figure for single tier busing. She spoke about the relationship between universal preschool and the need for extended day.

9. New Business

a. 1st Read Policy

- BEC: Non-Public Sessions
- BEDG: Minutes
- BHC/GBD: Board-Employee Communications
- CHCA: Approval of Handbooks and Directives
- JFAB: Admission and Tuition of Nonresident Students

Rich Cahoon noted these policies brought forward for a first read. Please send any comments to him or Carol Hills.

Public Comment:

Bob Edwards said that there isn't anyone that is not concerned with their tax bills. It appears that there is a rush to get something on the warrant. The process seems flawed. Present the statistics and make an informed decision. It has the appearance of rushing through, likely resulting in a negative response.

The board broke for a five-minute break at 9:13 p.m. and reconvened at 9:19 p.m.

b. Default Budget and Recommendations

Discussed in non-public session.

c. Gross Budget

Discussed along with general budget discussion.

10. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Kimberly Saunders certified that manifests listed totaling \$531,637.50 and payroll totaling \$1,292,904.81 have been reviewed by her and found to be proper charges against the Contoocook Valley School District for goods and/or services received and have been properly processed prior to their submittal to the School Board.

Stephan Morrissey moved to approve the manifests as presented. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous

11. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II (If Required)

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Personnel**
- c. Legal**

Stephan Morrissey moved to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for matters of negotiations, personnel, and legal at 9:21 p.m. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

School Administration remained in the room for non-public session.

Rich Cahoon moved to exit non-public session at 10:47 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Stephan Morrissey moved to seal the minutes of negotiations for one year and to seal the minutes of non-public session on the warrant articles for a period of one year. In addition, sealing the minutes of non-public session on the default for a period of one year.

Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Staffing requests:

A request for a staffing increase for two 1:1 Para educators was made. There is an intensive special needs program at PES. Kimberly said that she has no capacity to address an IEP placement decision. Dick Dunning shared concern that another school cannot meet the need due to lack of resources. It speaks to challenges in small schools.

Rich Cahoon moved to approve the two positions. Stephan Morrissey second. Unanimous.

At this time, the board voted on the manifests (see minutes under agenda item 10.)

Stephan Morrissey motioned to adjourn at 11:00 p.m. Kristen Reilly second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok