

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, December 5, 2019
(Rescheduled from Tues., December 3, 2019)

School Board Meeting

SAU Office
7:00 p.m.

Minutes

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Alan Edelkind,
Jim Fredrickson, Katherine Heck,
Janine Lesser, Niki McGettigan,
Stephan Morrissey, Crista Salamy,
Tim Theberge, Jerome Wilson

Abby Kamieniecki, Student Rep.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Tim Markley, H.R.
Tim Grossi, Facilities
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Amy Janoch, HES

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Stephan Morrissey 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 19, 2019

Rich Cahoon moved to accept the minutes of November 19, 2019. Jerry Wilson second. Niki McGettigan and Crista Salamy abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Kimberly Saunders certified that manifests listed totaling \$295,340.33 and Payroll totaling \$1,355,706.62 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.

Rich Cahoon moved to approve the manifests as read. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

4. Expenditure and Encumbrance Report (Board Vote Required) – David Jack

Kimberly reported no significant changes having occurred.

Rich Cahoon moved to accept and to authorize the expenditure report and any encumbrances therein. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

5. Points of Pride

Dr. Kimberly Saunders shared Points of Pride as reported to her from administrators.

6. Public Comment

Brad Howell, Frankestown, said that when the potential closing of FES came to light, it created a sort of fire storm in the town. Town's people are asking if it is really necessary given that student enrollment has been higher in recent years. Many questions have arisen. Concerns are apparent. Low enrollment is not new; there are no easy answers. Mr. Howell said that the decision should not be hurried. It must be beneficial to the children and in balance with the towns. The community must be fully informed. The Articles of Agreement do not allow the School Board to close a school. Closures must be approved by a 2/3's vote of the electorate. A comprehensive analysis is required as a result of a proposed closure. He understands that a School Board meeting located in Frankestown is under consideration. Closure recommendations must be made in advance with underlying data. He suggested that a comprehensive analysis should be completed before submitting a closure proposal. There should be meaningful opportunity for all of the communities at large, and not just Frankestown. He hopes that the voters and the board do not see the need to close small schools. He hopes that the process is transparent and applies the law.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Personnel

None.

Dr. Kimberly Saunders said that the School Board is taking more than its share of knocks in social media with regard to the future status of Francestown Elementary School. Dr. Saunders said that the School Board did not put anything in motion for the reassignment of students in Francestown. That was done by the administration. It was not an action of the board. Dr. Saunders took responsibility for bringing the reassignment forward. On November 2nd, this was brought forward at the budget work session. No decision has been made. No article has been prepared. When this issue came up, the administrative team began the budget cycle. Principals look at projected student enrollment. In late September, the projected enrollment for FES was 38 students. This was the lowest anticipated enrollment of any of the schools. After lengthy discussion, Dr. Saunders presented information to the board on November 2nd that enrollment is anticipated at 38 with census data projecting little change in future years. The minimum number of staff in a building, regardless of the number of students, is stated to be seven. In addition to staff, students need access to a school counselor, those involved with special education, a school psychologist, and a nurse. At that time, the administration proposed the option of a warrant to temporarily reassign the FES students until a time at which that the FES student enrollment increased.

Why FES? At the beginning of the budget season, the enrollment is anticipated to be 38. It was important to bring this information forward. This is the time for the initial budget to be brought forward. During discussion, if further discussion was to take place, the Francestown community needed to be included. Stephan Morrissey, Francestown School Board Representative/School Board Chair suggested that a future School Board meeting be held in Francestown to allow community members to participate in the conversation. The School Board meeting scheduled on December 17th will take place at Francestown Elementary School at 7:00 p.m.

As enrollment continues to decline, when is small too small needs consideration? As enrollment continues to decline, there are growing educational, social-emotional, and resource concerns. When looking at a gross budget of \$50M, it is important to look at what is educationally sound to educate children. (see letter to FES families attached)

Stephan Morrissey said that his concern is that we start this conversation as a conversation. He would like to have an open forum and invite the public to come and speak and perhaps discuss what the next steps might be. Francestown is not the only town. We are struggling with enrollment in several of the schools. He asked the board to consider an early meeting on the 17th. He suggested a 6:00 start time with an open forum. What is the pleasure of the board?

Rich Cahoon said that expectations should be set for the meeting. This proposal is that this is the beginning of the conversation, there is nothing to provide yet, there is no binder. Conversation is the starting point. Enrollment data is available.

Dr. Kimberly Saunders said that if the board is going to entertain this that is the starting point. If we are going to put the community through an emotional conversation, the board first needs to decide if they can entertain a warrant on this topic. Is there a consensus to have this conversation? Dr. Saunders said that the board, in the past, has not been willing to entertain closing a school. If there is no intent on behalf of the board to reassign students, it is not fair to put the Francestown community through this.

Stephan Morrissey said that there was concern about the education of students in a school of less than 40. It is about the kids. It is never just about the finances. The conversation gives time to plan. He said that he was not expecting a warrant article this year. He said that was his impression.

Alan Edelkind said that it is December 5th, when is the last date to post a warrant. It doesn't seem that there is enough time.

Janine Lesser said that it is her understanding that they are entertaining a warrant in the future, not this year. Time is being asked, if there is an interest to have the discussion?

Crista Salmay said that she thought that this was being addressed for the upcoming year.

Rich Cahoon said that he does not recall that the administration's recommendation was for a warrant article this year. They said that this is something that should be thought about.

Niki McGettigan said that on November 2nd, it was clear that administration said that if we are going to keep our schools open, if there is a reassignment for a number of years that would address the situation until enrollment increased. Another possibility discussed was the potential to rent out parts of a school in vacant space to generate revenue. She did not think that this was something being brought forward for next year.

Stephan Morrissey said that he feels that the consensus is that the board is not looking for something for the upcoming warrant and year but wants to continue to have the discussion.

Niki cautioned not to confuse the upcoming budget and this topic.

Rich Cahoon said that staffing in the proposed budget is based on seven staff members in a building. That is directing the proposed budget. Rich further said that this year's budget now comes from staff requests at the middle school and high school.

Katherine Heck said that this discussion needs to begin. At this time, the board has a lot of details to work out. We owe it to the FES community to hold the next meeting there. This is not just about Frankestown, it is about any school that drops below a certain number.

Stephan Morrissey confirmed the business portion of the school board meeting at 7:00 and an earlier start time for an open forum for a lengthier conversation.

8. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Monthly Events Calendar – December 17th meeting, conflicts, and relocation

1) Set Public Hearing Dates

Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the SAU was the date, time, and location set for the Public Hearing on the proposed 2020/2021 budget.

In addition, Tuesday, February 4, 2020 was the date set for District Meeting Part I (Deliberative Session) at 6:00 p.m. at ConVal High School in the gym. The snow date was set for Thursday, February 6th.

2) February 18th School Board Meeting Date

The February 18th School Board meeting was moved to Thursday, February 20th to accommodate scheduling.

b. December 1, 2019 Enrollment Update

December 1st enrollment was reviewed.

Rich Cahoon said that the Superintendent was provided with a registered birth list broken down by which school year they would fall into. Can the two merge (straight-line enrollment projections anticipated by the census)?

AES K = for 20/21 is 22, BES K is 11, DCS is 20, FES is 5, GES is 22, HES is 8, PES is 49, TES is 6.

Rich said that is registered births broken down by cohort. Demographers say that 87% of registered births can be counted on because of moves in or out.

c. Accept Gift/Donation (Board Vote Required)

- 1) CVSD/FES requests authorization to accept a gift/donation of \$2,500.00 from Mark Aquilino-Outdoor Pride Landscape and Snow Management for the purpose of iReady pilot in elementary/middle schools.

Tim Theberge moved to accept the donation as read with gratitude. Jim Fredrickson second. Unanimous.

9. Reports

a. Student Representative – Lorien Tyne/Abby Kamieniecki

Abby Kamieniecki reported that due to snow days, Student Council did not meet this week. Basketball and skiing have started and winter track starts tomorrow.

b. Teacher Representative

None.

c. Education Committee – Jerome Wilson

Jerry Wilson reported that on Thursday, November 21, the education committee met to discuss the following agenda items. The first item was a review of the 9-12 science resource materials and resources which are included in this year's budget. To facilitate more hands on learning, the department is purchasing additional probes which are used with the hand held data collection devices which are used in lab work. In addition, chemistry textbooks have also been ordered to provide additional supplemental materials as not all students have internet access in their homes.

Last year, the board upgraded the math requirement for graduation, and the math department chair provided an overview of the department's efforts to review and refine the curriculum maps for both parts of algebra I. They are also working on developing and refining the interventions which are needed to be in place so all students can meet the algebra requirement. The student's performance on unit assessments are being analyzed and students are given the opportunity for targeted math interventions during the Tuesday and Thursday TASC Blocks or from 2:30-4:00 on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

An executive summary based on Catalyzing Change in High School mathematics was also distributed. This document related to a daylong workshop which the math department and special education teachers attended.

For the next agenda item, Ms Voto and Ms Jones presented a set of recommendations for the students' use of VLACS courses for our consideration. A number of recommendations would apply to students using time during the school day to take VLACS courses while others would apply to students taking them outside of the school day. Among these, starting with their sophomore year, students would be able to use one of their four blocks to take a VLACS course. This would require that students meet with their counselors and complete approval forms and have both student and parent/guardian sign off on them. A list of all recommendations is available for board members and this will be sent to the policy committee for review

In other business, Kristen Reilly requested additional information on the status of recess times at the elementary and middle school levels and inquired about snack time at both middle schools and wanted these as agenda items for the committee to discuss.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 19.

d. Policy Committee – Rich Cahoon

No report.

10. Old Business

a. Trust Fund Summary

Jim Fredrickson referenced the updated version included in tonight's board packet. A recommendation for future warrants on trust funds will need to be decided.

b. Open Accountant Position

Dr. Saunders reported that we have an open salaried position posted at \$55K. We have been unable to fill that position. Mr. Markley did some homework around averages of base salaries for accountants. Because of the complexity of this, we are looking for a CPA. The average salary is \$71,900. We are looking to be able to increase the salary range up to \$75K.

Rich Cahoon moved to increase the salary for the accountant position up to \$75K. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

It is in the current budget for \$55K. Kimberly reminded the board that the reason we are looking to hire an accountant is because the auditors have pushed for us to hire one.

c. Budget 2020-2021

Nothing has changed in Version 3 until the recent increase confirmation for the accountant.

The Communications Committee is still talking about a communication person. Looking at a contracted service is being investigated with the use of funds within the budget. Input from the board as to what they see this individual doing should be forwarded to Kimberly Saunders.

Rich Cahoon asked if this version was built with anticipation of a bond one year from now. Is there anything that needs to be added as a result of work needed outside a bond? A bond in 2021 is anticipated. The first year of a bond is interest payment only.

d. Frankestown setting Public Forum schedule

Discussed earlier on the agenda.

e. Discussion potential Bond Article

Tim Grossi said that there is the possibility of a bond. Items would potentially qualify for .36 on the dollar for building aid. There is a process to follow. By January 1st, a letter of intent would be needed to send to the DOE. The next step would be to contract with an architect to fulfill the need for drawings and other information to the DOE. The State would determine if we qualify. The request for an architect comes as an unfunded request. Parking lots do not qualify for building aid.

Janine Lesser said that she believed that there was a backlog of building aid requests. Tim Grossi said that he was at the DOE and nothing was shared about that. We could apply for a specific amount and it could get voted down.

Kimberly Saunders said that the January 1st deadline is to get in line.

Tim Grossi said that at the high school, through the budget process, two projects proposed were the renovation to student services and to the counseling office. The work cannot be done in-house. An architect and a construction manager needs to come on board and price the work out.

Authorization to spend for architectural services is being asked.

Stephan Morrissey reminded the board that if the bid is over \$15K a bidding process is required.

Tim Theberge moved to allow the district to expend up to \$15K for architectural fees for the two projects.

Rich Cahoon said that it should be two separate motions.

Tim Theberge moved to allow the district to expend up to \$15K for the purpose of architectural services and fees for the purpose of scoping out projects that would qualify for building aid. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.

Tim Theberge moved to allow the district to spend up to 15K for the purposes of architect design services fees for the purpose of work in the student counseling area and student services area. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

f. 2nd Read/Adoption Policy (Board Vote Required)

- EHB: Data/Records Retention

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the policy as read. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

- GBEA: Staff Ethics

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the policy as read. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

- GBEB: Staff Conduct

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the policy as read. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

- JFABD: Education of Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the policy as read. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

- JFABE: Education of Children in Foster Care

Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the policy as read. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous.

11. New Business

a. Food Service Deficit

Kimberly Saunders said that in the past, we have relied on our unreserved fund balance to pay our food deficit debt. David Jack is wondering if this is a year if the Board wants to add \$100K to the proposed budget to cover a deficit. We are on track to have a \$108K deficit this year. It has been between \$90 and \$110K.

The conversation is to consider adding this in the proposed budget. There is less likelihood that there will be funding to cover this in the future as a result of ratcheting down the budget.

Jim Fredrickson moved to add \$100K to Version 4 of the 2021 budget for the purpose of covering the food service deficit. Jerry Wilson second.

Niki McGettigan asked if there is information on why this continues to happen. Kimberly said that we are running much less of a deficit than in the past.

Rich Cahoon opposed. All else in favor.

Rich Cahoon said that this would be funded by the unexpended balance before funding any trust funds or returning funding to the voters. The chance that we would not have money left is slim.

Motion carried.

12. Public Comment

Kevin Pobst, Francestown, shared three thoughts about the FES meeting on December 17th.

- The idea of the impact of the appearance of urgency.
- Making sure that the input received from the community is high quality.
- Give the community an idea of what it might look like in the next year to continue the conversation.

The reason that the community got wound up was because there was nothing that led the community to believe that this is not an urgent matter. By having the meeting on December 17th, continues to feed the community the idea that there is urgency. Mr. Pobst suggested not having the meeting on the 17th because there will be a sense of urgency. An urgency does not facilitate good communication. An open forum is a vague concept. He would fill it with the opportunity for quality input. It would be useful to begin the meeting sharing the lack of urgency. Sharing the reasons for the deep concern should be relayed. What is behind the concern? People don't buy in quickly. They don't buy in to the concept that there is such a thing as "too small" of a school. He suggested a presentation that encouraged higher quality input from the group. Mr. Pobst said that a forward looking plan should be shared at the meeting. School Board meetings do not facilitate dialogue. The December 17th meeting won't be dialogue, it will be difficult to get into meaningful conversation.

Steve Chamberlin, Francestown, shared his appreciation for thoughtful communication. The starting point for this conversation is that Francestown has a target on its back. It did not start with a need to reconcile the quality of education with the budget. He asked the board to reject and move toward a more strategic process.

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

a. Personnel

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

a. Legal

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

a. Negotiations

Tim Theberge moved to enter into non-public at 8:30 p.m. for matters of personnel, legal, and negotiation. Jim Fredrickson second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Five minute recess at 8:30 p.m.

Janine Lesser moved to exit non-public session at 9:02 p.m. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Tim Theberge moved to seal the minutes on negotiation for five years. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.

Tim Theberge moved to seal the minutes on personnel for five years. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.

Tim Theberge motioned to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok