

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road

Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Emergency School Board Meeting

Friday, March 13, 2020

6:00 p.m.

SAU Office

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Dick Dunning,
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,
Katherine Heck, Janine Lesser (electronically),
Niki McGettigan, Kevin Pobst,
Robert Short Jr., Tim Theberge,
Stephen Ullman, Jerry Wilson

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Tim Markley, H.R.
Lori Schmidt, B.A.
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Mark Schaub, Tech.
Stephanie Syre-Hager, AES
Kathie Morrocco, Pierce
Nicole Pease, DCS
Kat Foecking, FES
Colleen Roy, GES
Larry Pimental, PES
Fabi Woods, TES
Anne O'Bryant, SMS
Tim Conway, SMS
Jim Elder, GBS
Lexy Heatley, GBS
Michelle Voto, CVHS
Gib West, CVHS
Steve Bartsch, CVHS
John Reitnauer, CVHS
Jen Kiley, ATC

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Kimberly Saunders called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Introduction and Swearing in of Returning and New Board Members

Kimberly Saunders introduced newly elected board members, Stephen Ullman, Antrim, Kevin Pobst, Frankestown, Katherine Heck, Greenfield, Alan Edelkind, Dublin, Jim Fredrickson, Sharon, and Rob Short Jr., Peterborough. New board members were sworn in.

Kimberly Saunders reported that Janine Lesser is attending tonight's meeting electronically.

3. Call for Election of Officers – Superintendent

Dick Dunning moved to elect Rich Cahoon as School Board Chairman. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Dick Dunning moved to elect Janine Lesser as School Board Vice-Chair. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

4. In Accordance with RSA 91-A:2, II, the ConVal School Board has called an emergency meeting of the board for the purposes to discuss remote learning

Dr. Saunders reported that over the last two weeks, she has been working with administrators looking at remote learning in the event it would be needed. Kimberly said that she has consistently been in touch with the Monadnock Community Hospital, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Commissioner of the NH Department of Education.

Kimberly reported that in the last week she has learned that not everyone who is symptomatic is tested. You may get screened. If you meet the criteria set by the State, you may be tested for COVID-19. If you are tested, you become a person under investigation (PUI). Today we learned that we have two who have become a PUI in separate buildings. Testing is limited by region and by State. Medical professionals report that the number of cases will likely double every six days. Because of the inability for wide scale testing, it might be too late and spread in the community. Our school community has almost 100 students who are immunosuppressed and are medically fragile. In the last two days, through contact with families, Kimberly said that she has learned about significant concerns for their health. She has received emails from parents who do not want to send their students to school and want help with educating them. Significant numbers of emails have asked us to close our buildings and cancel events. This morning, athletic event discussions took place. Staff wise, we have 130 staff that are considered high risk, and 90 considered higher risk, and only by age. On top of this, we have students returning from college campuses that have closed in areas that there is risk or has been an outbreak. The CDC recommendation for closure would allow a floor to ceiling disinfection. It will give the community time to develop a clear understanding of what COVID 19 looks like. It is unclear what impact short and medium term closures may have on mitigation. We also will have people that will have childcare issues. At the time, based on what we have learned and the lack of clarity and specificity from State leaders, Dr. Saunders said that she recommends moving to remote learning and to close our buildings with the exception of identified staff. We are ready and have been sending work home with students. The time would be essential to allow what we implement to work. It allows staff to connect with technical staff with questions prior to remote learning beginning on Wednesday.

Rich Cahoon entertained a motion to continue to pay hourly staff in the event of a closure.

Dick Dunning moved to pay hourly staff in the event of a closure. Tim Theberge second.

Jim Fredrickson asked the rationale as to why we started with that. Rich Cahoon said that he anticipated questions.

Kimberly Saunders said that many hourly employees have a role in the remote instruction.

Stephen Ullman asked who are hourly wage personnel. Paras, some tech positions, admin assistants, and facilities.

Stephen asked if there is contractual language that they be paid.

Paras are under included in the CVEA contract. No contract for others; the understanding is it is 40 hours per week.

Janine Lesser said that everything that she has read indicates that social distancing will fall hardest on those that are paid hourly and cannot work at home or work minimally at home. She encouraged paying hourly staff to mitigate harm.

Jim Fredrickson asked what the estimated cost is. Do we owe more at the end of this? Is the school year extended?

Rich Cahoon said that remote education counts as a day and will not be required to be made up. The current budget will cover this.

Kimberly Saunders said that we have worked with staff. Instructional staff have a really clear role, including paraprofessionals. There may be some students who we may not be able to meet their needs and we may need to run summer school to meet the need. Everyone will have work to do.

Katherine Heck asked if the paras have the technology going home with them to do what they need to do. Kimberly said that technology is moving into the hands of those that need it.

Additionally, Katherine asked that the option be opened up to allow staff to punch in remotely.

Tim Markley estimated less than 100 support people and most are hourly.

Kimberly estimated 138 total staff.

Kevin Pobst clarified that we are talking about maintaining pay for hourly staff. Most will have a role.

Unanimous.

Dick Dunning moved to affirm closing beginning Monday, March 16th and with the goal of reopening on Monday, April 6th with the understanding that the Superintendent may extend this as she deems necessary.

Jerry Wilson second.

Rob Short Jr. asked how this affects the day. How do the days count in terms of hours per day?

Kimberly Saunders said that a menu of learning will be provided with suggested amounts of time for specific purposes. Seat time is not recommended. We are looking for elementary students to maintain their skills and for middle and high school to continue with their curricula forward and complete their assignments.

Elementary principals have put together very clear menus that will go home with students with information on how to access. Parents will have a clear menu about what students can do.

Alan Edelkind asked that since school will be closed on Monday, how will the information be shared. Kimberly said that she will communicate that school will be closed on Monday with remote learning beginning on Wednesday. Letters will be going home.

Attendance policies will be waived in this unprecedented situation.

What percentage of students do not have internet access? Approximately 12%, or 45 students K-12, that do not have access. We are working on acquiring hot spots to loan to families for this amount of time.

Stephen Ullman shared his difficulty with the first grader working on their reading skills; will there be interaction with the teacher? He sees the challenge teacher by teacher.

Kimberly said that elementary students often work in stations. The students have a level of independence. The K-4 plan is to maintain their skill level.

Kimberly reported that Lori Schmidt is working with the USDA and State Department so that we can still provide free and reduced meals to students that receive them. This will allow us to provide lunches. These families will be reached out to outline the process. We will be able to deliver to some places. It includes breakfast as well.

We will also be working with the End 68 Hours group as well to continue their work.
Do we have any plans for childcare? We do not have the capacity to provide childcare.
Teachers will be available to work with students on line and in small groups through Google classroom.
What are we doing with students who require individual services? School counselors, paras, and case managers will work on modifications and interfacing with parents and students.
Describe what a typical day in the next two weeks will look like. As an example, a seventh grade student would belong to Google Classroom. Teachers would upload assignments. Students will work through those assignments and teachers would make themselves available and communicate those times. If students need more one on one, that can happen. Teachers and students will be able to interact grades 5-12 in Google Classroom.
Science Labs for high school students will not be possible traditionally; other ways to interact will be possible.
It was suggested that town and local Libraries and other hot spots should be notified of this closure. People access the Wi-Fi at the libraries.
If we are closing until April, would we still have spring break? It is premature, decisions will be made as we move forward.
March 16th to April 6th is proposed. Discussions would take place should the plan have a recommended change.
Monday and Tuesday, teachers will come in as well as all other staff. Plans would be finalized; on Wednesday we would launch remote learning.
Why this time period? If we mitigate and disinfect, an assessment can be made.
Keeping everyone separated from everyone is crucial; we are behind.
Providing dates allows parents the ability to plan.

The motion under discussion includes the goal to reopen on April 6th.
Do we still pay for contracted services while closed? Contractually, we have contracts to pay. It is up in the air and will be resolved. For food service, they have indicated that the contract would be reviewed because it is clearly a different level of service.
Rich Cahoon said that if we are paying for contracts, our contractors better be paying their employees.
Niki McGettigan thanked the leadership, teachers, and administrators for their work in this area.
Tim Theberge seconded the communication in the district; it has been fantastic. He said that his children have been able to communicate to him what the plan is.
Unanimous.

Rich Cahoon said that there will be financial implications to this.

Kimberly Saunders said that this will bring relief to many people while others will be very unhappy.

Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 6:52 p.m. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok