

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, September 24, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Physical Location: None

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86531024898?pwd=bzRtVXVZU3VFbkZoTjVyRGJaYlk0Zz09>

Password: uE2BVD

Telephone: 1 301 715 8592

ID: 865 3102 4898

Password: 174124

Minutes

Present: John Robertson, Henry Kunhardt, Jeff Brown, Bob Marshall, Carole Monroe, Diane Callahan, George Willard, Ed Juengst, Janine Lesser, Katherine Heck, Tim Theberge, Alan Edelkind, Stephen Ullman, Kimberly Saunders, Kristie LaPlante, Kate Fuller, Ed Walker, K. Vanderbilt

1. Call Meeting to Order

John Robertson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Accept Minutes of August 27, 2020

Passed over.

3. School Reopening Opportunities and Challenges

Kimberly Saunders reported that K-4 students are back, as well as 5-6 at both middle schools, and 7-8 at GBS are back. Tent challenges exist to get students back. Ninth grade students have returned. Grades 10-12 are working remotely.

Challenges include simultaneous livestream teaching balanced with students present as well. Making sure that technology is working and working for students as well is a challenge. The tent issue is the one that is appropriately receiving the most administrative attention at this time.

ConVal is working with legal counsel, limiting conversation. The tent vendor was provided a letter to cure the problems that have arisen and we are waiting for him to complete that work. We have tents that are up but we are not able to use at this time because of issues with permitting. Tents have to be permitted with the towns and the fire marshal. We are looking specifically to Peterborough's Code Enforcement Officer for permitting. There is specific paperwork about the tents related to engineering specs for installation, weight ratings, wind shear ratings etc. that is needed. This is part of the problem, the need for proper paperwork.

Smaller tents do not have the same permitting process. We will stay in the tents as long as the weather works for us. It is likely that we will be outside again in the spring.

We are working with the Scott Lawson Group simultaneously. We have purchased ionization systems. The virus load inside is different than outside the building. Being outside is preferable. Once inside during colder months we want to make sure we have the proper intake/outtake of air.

Ed Juengst said that he recently heard a report about the dilemma that has occurred with the tents.

Stephen Ullman brought tent issues, both recent and years ago, that were safety issues that caused bodily harm or had the potential to as a reminder for the need of permitting.

Kimberly Saunders said that the Town of Peterborough own several tents and they will undergo the same scrutiny in the future in the inspection process. She said that the issue is getting the necessary documents to us so that we can go through the proper permitting process.

John Robertson asked about GOFERR Funds and what the background is there and how it can be dealt with in a reasonable manner.

Kimberly Saunders said that there is at least one town administrator present; she would like for them to speak and help the conversation. Kimberly said that the school district was taken off guard about the GOFERR Funds. We received CAREs dollars to the tune of \$157 per student. It was said that we would likely receive some FEMA dollars. It became apparent that FEMA would not allow districts to apply for FEMA dollars, but the Office of Homeland Security said that information for reimbursement should be sent to the towns. We received notice on a Friday at 4:44 p.m., with a Tuesday deadline. What they said was that each of the towns have this GOFERR funding that is invoiced for monthly. Things that exceed our regular costs, such as hand sanitizer, could be given to the towns to ask that they submit it for GOFERR funds. Some towns have not received much in GOFERR funding. It is not a clear way to divide up costs.

Kristie LaPlante, Town of Bennington, said that they received the request from the district on a Monday. The question was how do we get this to qualify. She spoke with Homeland Security. If ConVal were to invoice for equitable costs for Bennington, could they turn around and submit it in October? The response was that if the district incurred those costs prior to September 1st, they could not be submitted for. There is some back and forth. It is an odd set up with the State.

Kimberly Saunders said that some of our towns didn't even get \$40K. She has spent time speaking with the Commissioner of Education about this. The Governor and Commissioner are saying that there is plenty of money available. She has asked that they identify where so that she can apply.

Kimberly said that some students have gone to VLACS for their education choice. The State identified that adequacy funds would still be available to ConVal. The Governor sent \$7M of CAREs funding to VLACS; it equates to \$350 per student while we are receiving \$157. But, they don't have the costs that brick and mortar schools do, like hand sanitizer, cleaning costs, etc. Adequacy comes later and the State said that some of our costs could be covered by adequacy for students in VLACS.

Kimberly Saunders said that ConVal is working from a frozen budget. We are not going to deficit spend.

John Robertson said that towns are in the same boat.

Jeff Brown asked how we are accommodating students absent tents. Kimberly said that we are not able to accommodate students. Students are not in the buildings. We are racing to resolve the tent issue and at the same time have a Plan B and a Plan C. The HVAC system will allow students to be inside. The goal for the winter is to be inside and go back outside in the spring. We will adapt accordingly.

Kate Vanderbilt, Emergency Management Dublin, asked about GOFERR Funds. A letter from the State said that CAREs ESSER grants funds were available.

Kimberly said that \$326K was our portion of the \$33M. Those dollars have been accounted for and allocated; they were very early on. They don't consider them allocated until the grant is closed out. When the funds first came in the last fiscal year, we did a significant cost analysis. We knew that costs for reopening would exceed for the present predicament. We earmarked those dollars for opening costs; hand sanitizer, masks etc.

Bob Marshall said that in Greenfield, they are eligible for \$42K for GOFERR funds. He spoke about drawdowns and expenses that will not be reimbursed. Losses from Crotched Mountain are being calculated. We have lowered appropriations to keep the tax rate from spiking. He is sure each town has a story to tell.

Katherine Heck said that in March, FEMA released guidelines saying they would cover costs and then changed their guidance later. Homeland Security, FEMA, and the Governor are meeting next week. The towns have spent their money, or are in line to spend to reopen. She was told that new guidance might be available on GOFERR funds.

Kimberly said that the district has pushed back on the State and other offices. This use of GOFERR came out of left field and was unanticipated.

Kristie LaPlante asked if there is an estimated price tag for PPE and other items. Kimberly said that the costs equal about a million dollars. We froze the budget so we could move monies around. We have slated things to spend from capital accounts to allow us to manage within the budget.

Jeff Brown asked if the tents are part of the \$1M. Kimberly said that part of the \$1M is tents. We have been working to transfer dollars to cover expenses.

Where do we go from here? What do we do? The Governor's Guidelines on Friday will help provide a better picture. Given what the district was originally told, and then changed, we may have made different choices. Katherine Heck referenced an article that stated that Salem NH school district was at \$2.2M in reopening costs, Hudson at \$5.5M, and Manchester at \$11M in reopening costs.

Carole Monroe said that she assumed the CAREs funds have been allocated.

Kimberly spoke about CAREs money that went to private schools. The rate per student is very different. There are no remaining CAREs money to be allocated in NH to her knowledge.

Kristie LaPlante asked about \$4M released today for SPED. Kimberly said that it would not necessarily offset costs for reopening.

4. Budget Projections

How will the budget process be impacted in the coming year? Kimberly said that the process has just begun. We need to have an estimated understanding of what it could cost to "make up" for lost learning for students. We are diving into that now.

The budget will go before the board at the first Saturday in December.

5. Selectmen's Advisory Committee (SAC) Membership

John Robertson said that a Selectperson from Bennington is needed for participation. John said that he would be willing to go to a Select board meeting and promote it. Kristie LaPlante and John Robertson agreed to connect.

6. Other

Tim Theberge spoke about broadband. For some towns, it is not an issue. But for many who are trying to fill out the last mile, they were hoping for grants. EDA involves public ownership. If we were in a situation where we had zero broadband, it would be easier because it could be municipally owned. For towns with some coverage, it is more difficult. Tim is hoping to speak with the project manager in Sanford, ME who took on similar project. Carole Monroe and Tim Theberge will connect on broadband.

Jeff Brown asked if in person meetings are planned. John Robertson said that we will have to wait to see what the conditions are.

Ed Juengst said that when he agreed to be appointed to the Select Board in Peterborough, they assured him that Zoom would be an option for him. He hopes for consideration that there remains an option for Zoom meetings to continue for those that are at higher risk.

John Robertson thanked everyone for showing up and said to stay safe.

Jeff Brown motioned to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. George Willard second. Unanimous. K

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok

Motion to amend and accept minutes at September 22, 2020 Selectmen's Advisory Committee meeting.