

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 20, 2020
6:30 p.m.

Physical Location: ConVal High School Library
184 Hancock Rd.
Peterborough, NH

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82697125458?pwd=d0M5MTRFb0JuaXhJMndZaUh0WEZwZz09>

Meeting ID: 826 9712 5458

Password: d5xrpP

Phone: +1 646 558 8656 US

Meeting ID: 826 9712 5458

Password: 577450

MINUTES

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Richard Dunning,
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,
Katherine Heck, Janine Lesser,
Kevin Pobst, Linda Quintanilha,
Robert Short, Jr., Tim Theberge,
Jerome Wilson

Greg Leonard, CVEA

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Lori Schmidt, B.A.
Carrie James, H.R.
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Larry Pimental, PES
Amy Janoch, HES
Fabi Woods, TES

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Rich Cahoon called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Right to Know for Public Meeting Emergency Declaration

Rich Cahoon read the "Right to Know for Public Meeting Emergency Declaration".

3. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3,II (6:30 pm – 7:15 pm)

Tim Theberge moved to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for matters of negotiation and legal at 6:35 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Janine Lesser motioned to exit non-public session at 7:24 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Tim Theberge moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for legal, student safety, and negotiations for five (5) years. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

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

a. September 29, 2020

Janine Lesser moved to accept the minutes of September 29, 2020 as presented. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

5. Points of Pride

Kimberly Saunders said that we are moving into our last five weeks of in-person learning. Teachers are working outside and promoting outdoor learning. Parents have reached out to thank specific teachers and share what is happening for their children. Laura Carr is working as a remote teacher and she is balancing students need for comfort with what is going on in the world right now and students' academic needs.

6. Public Comment

Rich Cahoon offered public comment, which he reminded is not a Question & Answer time, but rather time to make comment.

Bill Taylor, Peterborough, said that he does not understand the risk levels of the categories. What makes it a minimal or substantial level? More to come on this topic later on the agenda.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Personnel

1) Paraprofessional Justification(s)

Kimberly Saunders referenced the need for additional paraprofessionals, one is specific to a new student and another is the result of a student moving between cohorts. They are anticipated this year only.

Linda Quintanilha moved to approve the Paraprofessional requests. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Rich Cahoon asked the funding source for these positions. This is exactly why we have a Special Education Trust; is this where the funding would come? Kimberly Saunders said that this is unanticipated. A public hearing would be required to come from the trust.

Jim Fredrickson asked if we are comfortable that there is room in the budget. Lori Schmidt said that there are options. One position is covered by the encumbrance.

8. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Monthly Events Calendar

Equity Committee will meet at 4:30 pm rather than 5:30 pm on October 27th. A Budget & Property Committee work session to discuss the Capital Improvement Plan was scheduled on Friday, October 30th from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Equity Committee and Education Committee need to be reassigned dates; more to come.

b. ConVal School District Reopening Update & Local COVID Data Update

Kimberly Saunders invited Ed Walker, Peterborough Fire Chief and also Health Officer in to speak. He is also on the COVID Monitoring Team.

In terms of decision making, there is a clear protocol by meeting every morning to review data. Data is reviewed and a color level is determined. Phases are based on the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Blue is low, green moderate, yellow is significant mitigation, and red are shelter in place recommendations. The CDC does not spell out a number of cases as an indicator because in small communities, 1% of a community could be 8 or 9 people to create a closure in a school. In a red phase, it would be large scale and uncontrollable transmission. Orange/yellow is large scale transmission with significant COVID but it is very local; we know where it comes from and we can trace it back. Minimal to moderate transmission is when exposure can be seen in different settings with potential for a quick uptick with lack of controls in place.

We also spent a lot of time looking at the context and the environment. Situational awareness is important. There is an uptick around us but we are able to say confidently that we are in the green category in the nine towns in our community. Information is updated and sent to the entire team. Team make up was shared.

Data is reviewed and the team decides where we are in the four categories. There is some concern about the uptick. What are the decision levers? Trends in cases, and where in the community they are located are considered. At this point, the team feels strongly that we are still very much in the green while watching our communities. We are in the same place as when we decided to open. What we are seeing on the school side is that people are being cautious and careful.

Ed Walker said that looking at where these cases are coming from is important. He shared information about positive cases. It is important to separate out the spread. What we are seeing locally is from events. The ConVal School District is one of the few that currently has no active cases in students and staff. He credits this to what the communities are doing with outside space, outdoor learning, and lack of some sport activity. We need to push out to everyone in our district, the importance of pushing through the fatigue and getting through this. He credited issues with his crew with complacency.

Rich Cahoon asked if absenteeism is up or down compared to other years. Kimberly Saunders said that it is about the same. There are some days that are higher or lower, but in general it is average.

Athletic recommendations will be the topic of next week's board meeting and will be posted in advance of the meeting on the website.

9. Reports

a. Teacher Representative – Greg Leonard

Greg Leonard reported that students are appreciating education and having a good time. He said that staff are feeling a significant amount of stress related to being in a pandemic and due to the fact that we are doing things differently. Stress is higher at the middle schools in particular where changes were more significant. Wellness is a part of our recent professional development with a focus on supporting teachers through this process.

b. Policy Committee – Janine Lesser

Janine Lesser reported meeting on October 8th where a schedule was set up for the work that lies ahead through January. Title IX policies have begun review and will be worked on further. Significant progress is underway.

c. Strategic Plan Committee – Tim Theberge

Tim Theberge said that the meeting was focused on getting the Strategic Plan back on target. The committee looked at the timeline and what it should be. Membership was discussed. The initial proposal is for 20-22 members as opposed to the former 10. A targeted invitation vs. open invite is considered. Progress should be forthcoming in the upcoming months.

d. Communication Committee – Janine Lesser

Janine Lesser reported that the Roles and Responsibilities of the Communication Committee and Communication firm were discussed. Best utilizing services was discussed. Very happy with firm so far. Conversation about misinformation about reopening expenditures took place and how-to best remedy. Jim Fredrickson wrote a piece that he will fine tune and put on the website. The upcoming budget activity was discussed. Discussion around public communications on the topic of Monadnock Tent and Event was discussed. Jim will write a piece about adaptations of our HVAC systems in the district.

e. Education Committee – Jerry Wilson

Jerry Wilson said that the meeting focused on the assessment schedule. Each year, a variety of standardized tests are administered. An interim assessment has been asked of by the State. We asked for a waiver which was rejected. October testing therefore is underway. A suggestion to look at student performance data, compared to this fall, to identify areas of concern was voiced.

10. Old Business

a. NHSBA Resolutions 2021 (Board Vote Required)

Two resolutions have been proposed. Katherine Heck proposed one that was voted and submitted.

Tim Theberge submitted a second, which deals with last mile broadband access. Our district struggles with broadband access, even more so with remote expectations. In order to provide robust learning, Wi-Fi is needed?

A viable solution is asked to complete last mile in Tim's resolution. Work on a fiber solution is underway in Dublin. Greenfield is likely to follow as a result of currently having zero fiber.

Alan Edelkind asked if anything could be done in the resolution to fund retroactively for those towns already underway. Tim said that although NH is inadequate, up until the CARES act, little money has been spent on broadband. He did not incorporate funding from the state in the language. It was not his intent.

Robert Short, Jr., said that bonded is inadequate, we should put in cable or fiber. He said that a higher level should be pushed.

Katherine Heck moved to accept the proposal that Tim Theberge put forward as a resolution. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on roll call vote.

11. New Business

a. Health Insurance Buyout

Carrie James said that the current benefit option for a health insurance buyout is available for full-time eligible employees to receive a buyback for those who do not access insurance with the district.

The proposed solution is to offer this to all employees. Currently, two employees not previously eligible would now cost \$5,378.94. In general terms for each person who declines and receives the buyback, the district saves money.

Kevin Pobst moved to approve the insurance buyout to full-time employees not previously offered. Dick Dunning second.

Why did this come up? It was our initiative when reviewing benefits and looking at the inequities; it seemed unfair.

Robert Short, Jr. asked if someone gets the buyback, are they no longer eligible. Carrie said that if they had a qualifying event it would be prorated.

Katherine Heck asked to amend the motion to contain the dollar amount of up to \$5,378.94.

Rich Cahoon asked if those eligible need to be on our insurance for one year. Carrie confirmed, unless they are new.

Kevin Pobst accepted the amendment as proposed by Katherine as did Dick Dunning.

Robert Short, Jr. opposed. All others in favor on a roll call vote. Motion carried.

b. Requisition Approvals (Board Vote Required) – Lori Schmidt

Lori Schmidt referenced requisitions.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the requisitions in the amount of \$28,038.20. Jim Fredrickson second.

Kevin Pobst said that he appreciated the report provided several meetings ago with year to date information.

Unanimous on roll call vote.

c. Expenditure and Encumbrance Report - Lori Schmidt

Lori Schmidt reported most of the expenses are encumbered (the larger amounts). Payroll, benefits, routine expenditures are encumbered. As we make payments, some requisitions are estimates, and the differences would be closed out.

Jim Fredrickson moved to accept the expenditure report and adopt any encumbrances therein. Dick Dunning second. Katherine Heck abstained. All others in favor on a roll call vote. Motion carried.

d. DOE 25 & MS 25 (Board Vote Required)

Kimberly Saunders referenced the School Financial Report and MS 25. She said that there is concern that it is October 19th and that this is the first the Board is seeing it. This is based on the timing of our audit, which we have little control. We are working on adjusting the timing of future audits.

The Board will need to consider the option to retain the unreserved fund balance just for this year. If that is something that the Board would want to do, the Board needs to decide before this is submitted. It should be noticed.

After discussion, the Board directed administration to request authorization, Pursuant to Emergency Order #38, to utilize its fiscal year 2020 unrestricted fund balance in the amount of up to \$570,837 to fund these necessary health/safety expenditures.

Rich Cahoon said that we can't vote tonight but we can discuss it.

Dick Dunning said that we should retain it. Tim Theberge agreed. Any questions about the process?

Katherine Heck said that we would need to consult immediately to get the ball rolling. Towns are waiting on this to set the tax rate. She was in favor of retaining funds.

Should we proceed to retain for next meeting? Consensus was in agreement.

Jim Fredrickson asked what steps will occur so towns can set tax rates. Balance determination and submittal will follow. Once the DOE 25 is submitted, the DRA will determine if it is sound.

e. Projected Adequacy

Lori Schmidt said that the State provides an estimate of adequacy aid for the subsequent year by November 15th. The actual adjusted report is \$77,513.00 less in adequacy aid for this fiscal year than anticipated when the budget was prepared. Reductions translate to decreased adequacy aid.

What years are ADM #'s based on? Last year's 19/20 was used.

12. Public Comment

Kristin Larson said that her daughter is a junior and has not been allowed to attend school more than two days. She urged that the calendar be revisited to allow more in person learning days.

13. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Lori Schmidt certified that the manifests listed totaling \$937,742.39 and Payroll totaling \$958,861.96 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.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the manifests as presented. Jim Fredrickson second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

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

Tim Theberge moved to enter non-public session for matters of negotiation in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Linda Quintanilha moved to exit non-public session at 8:47 p.m. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Tim Theberge moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for a period of 5 years. Dick Dunning Second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Linda Quintanilha motioned to adjourn at 8:51 p.m. Tim Theberge second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok