

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

**CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD**

**Tuesday, January 12, 2021**

**School Board Meeting**

**Immediately Following Public Hearing  
(Which begins at 6:30 p.m.)**

**Physical Location: SAU # 1, Board Room  
106 Hancock Rd.  
Peterborough, NH**

**Virtual Location:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86527153063?pwd=ZVFxVG90V0g4YjhlRUplNjliaGFzUT09>

Meeting ID: 865 2715 3063

Passcode: i41SHm

Phone: +1 646 558 8656 US

Meeting ID: 865 2715 3063

Passcode: 776329

**MINUTES**

**BOARD**

Rich Cahoon, Richard Dunning,  
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,  
Katherine Heck, Janine Lesser,  
Niki McGettigan, Kevin Pobst,  
Robert Short, Jr., Tim Theberge,  
Stephen Ullman (7:45), Jerry Wilson

**ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.  
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.

Also Present: Members of the COVID-19 Monitoring Team - Dr. Lara Niemela, Rich Scheinblum, John Reitnauer, and Marshall Gale

**1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

**Rich Cahoon called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m. 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. Public Comment**

Rich Cahoon offered the public the ability to make comments for a period of two minutes.

Celeste Lunetta referenced emails she said that she sent in favor of allowing athletics if the students return to school on Tuesday.

**4. COVID-19 Monitoring Team Recommendation**

Kimberly Saunders said that several COVID-19 Monitoring Team members are in attendance tonight. Members look at the present context and historical context of COVID in our district. The opportunity cost for students to be out and the risks associated with adults coming into buildings was looked at. The recommendation was made for the District to return to the Green Phase from the Orange.

Rich Cahoon referenced a bulleted list of recommendations.

Ed Walker said that after careful consideration of:

- The context of COVID-19 in the nine communities that make up the ConVal School District
- The significant mitigation strategies that have been successfully put into place across the District
- The upgrades to air handling and air filtration
- The potential harm done to students who are unable to adequately access remote learning
- The minimal risks of exposure for staff and students

The CV Monitoring Team recommends that the School Board move the District back to the Green Phase of the Reopening Plan.

**Dick Dunning moved to accept the recommendation of the COVID-19 Monitoring Team and move the District back to the Green Phase of the plan. Tim Theberge second.**

Tim Theberge asked what this does relative to the decision on delaying athletics.

Rich Cahoon said that he reviewed motions previously made. If we move back to Green, it places us back to the December motion making athletics available under the conditions voted in December.

Kevin Pobst said that we took an affirmative action to pause athletics. Did we vote in the motion or do we need another vote?

Katherine Heck said that she is appreciative of the work that went into this. She asked about compelling research surrounding transmission in schools and safety of staff.

Dr. Lara Niemela said that we are still in a pandemic. As a pediatrician, she embraces the science that has been remarkable to get. Even when the original plan was developed, we know so much more now. We have good data that is repetitive that shows that school is not the place where COVID is spreading. Children do not have the receptors that make them more susceptible to the virus. Schools have had great mitigating strategies, including ConVal. ConVal did not have a case until November, and that was not related to a school exposure.

Jim Fredrickson asked when this take would affect if approved. He noted the news reports on the holiday surge, which are bothersome. Jim said that the COVID spread is due from non-symptomatic spread. He asked that this be spoken to.

Dr. Niemela said that the data is looked at every single day. We have been remarkably low. We still need to be careful and continue with strategies of washing hands, wearing masks etc. Asymptomatic spreading appears to occur in adolescents and adults. With our plan, and the pods, along with mitigating strategies, we can test and get on top of anything.

Richard Scheinblum reported that the team looked at school reopening indicators from the CDC and ConVal and translated to where we would fall out. We fell into "moderate risk". Core indicators in the ConVal District compared to the Hillsborough County run at half. Other core indicators looked at are the positivity rate and our rate. Where the cases are coming from was considered. In Peterborough, and other towns, things have been dropping. Peterborough is the place in the area that has picked up in cases and those are related to congregate living and not out in the community. Mr. Scheinblum said that it is important to look at all of the mitigation factors that were taken very seriously.

Kevin Pobst asked about what protocols or procedures are in place for adult to adult contact in schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that mitigation strategies are not just for students, they are for staff as well. Everybody screens as they come into the building. 6 feet apart is what is to be adhered to. Masks are part of the day from the time of entry. These are in place for everyone and not just for students.

Kimberly Saunders further said that meetings are held remotely as well. Staff are assigned to pods as well. Specialists go to a specific pod for a specific amount of time. Additionally, we do not spend time in and around each other's buildings. Mitigation is across the board and they are in the plan.

Janine Lesser asked if we go green, what would it mean for sports. John Reitnauer said that it would mean that athletes, according to the NHIAA outline, would participate and would learn remotely.

Kimberly Saunders said that indoor track would follow skills and drills since no venues are available for competition. Student athletes would continue to be screened for symptoms.

Alan Edelkind said that it is not only the athletes that are remote, it would be siblings as well. Confirmed.

Niki McGettigan thanked the teachers and administrators. She knows that this is very challenging. Niki asked if we will be able to sustain keeping ourselves through mitigation and following through. She asked for reassurance that as a group, we are reiterating to everyone how important it is to keep our staff safe too.

Rich shared a quote that we could only sustain this if the public followed public health advice, and that continues to be true.

Katherine Heck reported receiving over 20 emails and many phone calls and she does not take this decision lightly.

Tim Theberge said that when his kids were sick, he made sure he kept them out of school. When they met the criteria, they were allowed to return. It is incumbent upon following the guidelines and he urged everyone, when eligible, to get the vaccine to do so.

Kimberly Saunders said that it is the staff that have gone above and beyond to make sure the mitigation strategies are practiced. We are fortunate that our staff have stepped up and are doing the heavy lift here. The board and public should keep that in mind.

**In favor: Janine Lesser, Jerry Wilson, Alan Edelkind, Katherine Heck, Robert Short, Jr., Kevin Pobst, Niki McGettigan, Dick Dunning, Tim Theberge, Jim Fredrickson, Stephen Ullman.**

**Opposed: None.**

**Motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.**

**Tim Theberge moved to readopt the December winter athletic plan. Robert Short, Jr. second.**

**Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

## **5. Public Comment**

Rich Cahoon invited public comment

Sherry Nixon said that with going into green, we have commuters that travel to different cities to work. Given the number of increases, do we want the students and staff to meet in the same room? She asked how come the School Board does not meet in person.

Rich Cahoon thanked her for her comment.

Sarah Gilpatrick said that in the fall, when we were in the green zone, families were sent a form to opt into remote only. Will we have time to do that to inform staff? Kimberly Saunders asked Sarah to send that question to her directly through email, she can answer that. Confirmed.

Rachael Heard said that she is nervous going back to school. Everything seems closer to home. We have had more connections in the community to the virus. She worries about what might happen.

Leigh Frosch said that it would be beneficial in the future that we can only comment during the comment section. She did not realize that she missed her opportunity to ask questions earlier on. She urged that be shared in the future so that people will know the rules.

Rich said that we don't answer questions during either public comment section. It is a public comment opportunity. He urged questions to be directed to administrators.

Michelle Hautanen said that in our local community, restaurants are struggling because groups cannot meet. At every lunch time, it is like every classroom is a restaurant, masks must come off. The option to eat outside at school is no longer available.

Heather Whipple-Simard, thanked the board for their work and that of the COVID Monitoring Team. She is thankful for the opportunity for students to be able to participate in sports.

Erika Cutter said that as an employee in the district and parent of a student, we were made aware of a positive asymptomatic person. If school were in place, that person would be sharing the virus. She asked the board if they have considered testing adults so that they might know they are positive.

Victoria Burnham said that the recent new strains have struck her as a concern.

Molly Moore Lazar said that she is a teacher in the district and a mother. She has been so impressed with the plan. Everything has been calm. She is concerned that we are in a surge in NH right now. She asked what uncertainty might come from students and staff going back to green.

Katie V. commented about a statement that SLPs are being kept away from a pod before entering another. That is not true. We have specialists going from pod to pod, and school to school, and also from other districts.

Kimberly Saunders clarified that she was talking about art teachers, Spanish teachers, etc., and not itinerant staff or specialized service providers.

Karie said that as students go back, and now we are in 2021 and legislation may have changed. Do we have staff willing to be in for the in person options?

Rich said that not seeing any new hands, he asked for a motion to enter into non-public session.

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

**a. Negotiations**

**b. Personnel**

**c. Legal**

**Tim Theberge moved to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II at 8:20 p.m. for matters of personnel. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Tim Theberge moved to exit non-public session at 9:42 p.m. Robert Short, Jr. second.**

**Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Tim Theberge moved to seal the second session of non-public for a period of five years. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Stephen Ullman motioned to adjourn at 9:49 p.m. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok