

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

School Board Meeting

6:30 p.m.

Physical Location: SAU 1 Board Room

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89087799444?pwd=UnFNcE5STTJOdS9mY29EQjhTSXcvZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 8779 9444

Passcode: 1XbaPd

Phone: +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 890 8779 9444

Passcode: 296937

Minutes

BOARD

Rich Cahoon, Keira Christian,
Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind,
Jim Fredrickson, Katherine Heck,
Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,
Robert Short, Jr., Liz Swan,
Tim Theberge, Dr. Stephen Ullman,
Jerome Wilson

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Lori Schmidt, B.A.
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Amy Janoch, HES
Heather McKillop, CVHS
John Reitnauer, CVHS
Deb Riley, CVHS
Anne O'Bryant, SMS
Tim Conway, SMS
Kat Foecking, GBS
Lexy Heatley, GBS
Kris Levesque-Lee, PES
Colleen Roy, GES

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Tim Theberge called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Right to Know for Public Meeting Emergency Declaration

As a result of a quorum physically present in the room, the declaration was not necessary for this meeting.

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

a. Legal

Rich Cahoon moved to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for legal matters.
Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Dick Dunning moved to exit non-public session at 7:01 p.m. Katherine second. Unanimous.

Rich Cahoon moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for 10 years. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Janine Lesser moved to change the agenda to allow orientation by Attorney Eggert to occur first. Jerry Wilson second. Unanimous. (see agenda 8a.)

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

a. March 16, 2021

Katherine Heck moved to accept the minutes of March 16, 2021. Tim Theberge amended the minutes to reflect that he swore Keira Christian in and Lori Schmidt swore Liz Swan in as new board members. Unanimous as amended.

5. Points of Pride

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

6. Public Comment

None.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Co-Curricular/Athletic Notifications

Kimberly referenced the Notice of Stipend Positions for notification.

b. Kindergarten Registration and Enrollment

Information on kindergarten registration was referenced as informational.

8. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. School Board Development: Dean Eggert, Wadleigh Starr and Peters – The Role of the Board

Attorney Dean Eggert, spoke about Serving on the Local School Board. Understanding the significant roles as board members should be understood. The School Board is the core of the district. Outside influences impact the board. The board is the only local group that performs state level constitution function.

When you serve on the Board, you are governed by federally. When you accept grant funding, you will comply with all types of regulatory compliance measures. Articles of Agreement formed the school district. Everyone on the board has the ability to make law. School Boards are subject to expectations of the State School Board, Executive Orders, and the U.S. Department of Education. The citizens exercise authority as evident by the recount.

The Board has a duty to provide equality of educational opportunity. There is a statutory duty to feed students.

In terms of judicial function, the board has duties with regard to teacher dismissal. There will be a duty to assure that both the employee and the district are treated fairly. Care should be exercised. Similar functions occur with non-renewal of staff. Policy is created. Student discipline policy will be soon changing in July. Building and maintaining schools is a responsibility. Duties with regard to long-term suspension may be required. Another area are appeals of bullying decisions. Policies that protect gender identify are statutory mandated.

With all of this high-risk stuff going on, board members are indemnified against civil rights issues as long as the board member is functioning within the scope of their responsibilities.

Board members want to be careful that public service as a board member is compatible with other services. For example, you cannot serve as an employee of the district. Limitations on political advocacy are in place.

Every year, the board evaluates the Superintendent. Every year, board goals and objectives are set to be administered by the Superintendent. It is hard to evaluate if the scope of evaluation is not defined.

Policy adoption is a broad responsibility of the board. For all board duties, there is a correlation to the superintendent duty.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is an area of responsibility of the board and administration. Care to prevent confidentiality is critical. The board will not have access to student information unless it rises to the board level; not curiosity to know.

The Board takes an oath of office. The board performs at an ethical level; Policy BCA. The board wants to model ethics and the code of conduct. Attorney Eggert cautioned that board members exercise caution in areas of ethics. Board members have no authority as individuals. When the Board comes together, you are a powerful body. No one board member can instruct staff of the district.

Dean Eggert concluded with the "Right to Know" Law NH RSA 91-A. Care should be exercised when entering non-public session that it is entered under one of the right areas.

Dean Eggert suggested that all board questions go to the Chair, then Vice-Chair and through administration before reaching out for legal assistance. The Superintendent should always be in the loop.

Lastly, Dean said that over the years he has represented school districts. The Board should exercise and show care with honorable intentions. Communication is vital. ConVal has focused on communication over the past year.

Attorney, Dean Eggert thanked the Board for their time and exited the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

b. Monthly Events Calendar

The April and May monthly meeting calendars were updated to reflect meetings scheduled.

c. ConVal School District Reopening Update

Dr. Kimberly Saunders spoke about the high school reopening plan. Students have been brought back on April 5th.

Transportation issues have occurred and continue. 82% of students returned on Monday.

Kimberly asked for confirmation if it is the intent of the Board to comply with the Governor's Executive Order. Confirmed.

d. School Board Requests

- Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Numbers

Kimberly Saunders referenced information on participation included in the agenda packet.

- Enrollment by School and Town

Information on enrollment by school and by town was referenced. It was noted that 425 students are learning remotely. This data is from March enrollment.

- Addressing Learning Loss Presentation – Part 1

Dr. Ann Forrest shared information on Loss Learning. The presentation provided a foundation and direction that the district is moving in. Recommendations will come at a future date.

Dr. Forrest said that ConVal was well poised to enter into remote learning. We had technology in place. Buildings had annual goals on moving teachers to a blended environment. The transitions were challenging but made smoother by things already in place. Hot spots were acquired early on.

Our ability to continue to deliver breakfast and lunch through the spring and into the summer was a plus. Over the summer, our ability to pull together a large diverse group to create a reopening plan was a huge benefit. Only 20% of schools nationwide were able to begin in person learning.

When assessment data is looked at, data from the fall, nationwide, reflected a loss of almost three months behind in math. Reading loss was recognized as well.

Actual growth against anticipated growth reflects a larger impact in math than in reading.

Researchers are predicting that if the deficits that are seen in students continue in life that a loss of 15% of their lifetime earnings may result.

Overarching concerns are the cumulative learning loss, widening gaps in performance, widening gaps in opportunity, and the long-term impact. Dr. Forrest said that we are concerned about the greater learning loss for already struggling students.

Themes, when reviewing literature, evolve in the areas of providing a supportive environment, expanding learning time, providing high-intensity tutoring, and a focus on acceleration.

As administrators review research, what is acceleration? How is it defined? Why is acceleration important? What is the cost? The districts action or inaction could have a serious impact on learning.

Dr. Forrest entertained questions.

Janine Lesser asked what we think we could actually get students to participate in should be a consideration.

Dr. Forrest said that serious communication out to the public so that they understand how critical this is, is needed.

Janine Lesser asked about the potential of ESSER Funds for this purpose.

Rich Cahoon said that communication with parents is important. Some feel that if loss learning is not discussed, students will be fine. Rich further asked if demographics can be pulled out of the numbers to identify those that qualify for free and reduced meals.

Kimberly Saunders said that targeted parent communication needs to occur about specific students. Loss learning has long term impact on students now, in the future, and for our communities.

Dick Dunning spoke about value in outside programming. The earlier on that we can look at the neediest kids could help turn them around.

Kimberly Saunders assured that research-based recommendations will be brought forward.

Stephen Ullman spoke about \$30 billion aimed at summer school and other enrichment programs. He said that socio-economic gaps in loss learning are reported in Education Week. ConVal 2025 is serious about invoking community partnerships aimed as socio-emotional care.

Katherine Heck asked about tutoring and accelerated curriculum. Would they happen at the same time?

Dr. Forrest said that acceleration is looking at the regular curriculum and delivery in the classroom. Identifying the high-level standards that if students master, will well poise students for success and which can be let go of.

Kevin Pobst reinforced that getting the kids to show up for support and a personal prescription to specific students is key to getting this done.

Kimberly Saunders agreed and said that when this was proposed to the board, there was sticker shock to the estimate of cost.

Stephen Ullman agreed that there was sticker shock but also concern about time to effectively mount it this summer.

Kevin Pobst said that part of what Ann Forrest described in terms of acceleration involves pruning to stimulate growth in another area. That doesn't mean that we are piling just costs on; we could be pruning costs in other areas.

Robert Short, Jr., said that this will be a continuous thing. After grant dollars are gone it will still remain.

Liz Swan said that it is clear that learning loss is due to the pandemic. She asked how much of the gap was in remote learning. If we continue remote, will the gap grow or is it in a holding pattern?

Kimberly Saunders said that work is underway looking at what went well with remote learning and what the challenges were.

9. Reports

a. Teacher Representative

Rachael Heard read a statement from the Union. She reported that the March break was very much needed. CVA election process has begun. Scholarship donations continue to be accepted. Staff continue to be supportive of students.

b. Equity Committee

Rich Cahoon reported determining areas of focus and goals for the years was the discussion. Narrowing down to three focus areas took place. Scheduling early on, and impact on later schedules was a focus. Differences that exist between the middle schools was a focus. The third was the role of the counseling departments at the high school and middle school and the impact on introducing students that are available to them and preparing for post-secondary success.

c. Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Tim Theberge reported it was an organizational meeting. John Robertson and Jeff Brown were nominated as Chair and Vice-Chair. Increased involvement is of interest by this committee.

d. Policy Committee – Janine Lesser

Janine Lesser reported a new Policy Chair, Katherine Heck.

Janine said two policies are up for a second read, BEDH and KE. BDE will be pulled back.

Katherine Heck reported several policies in legal review. The fund balance policy will be reviewed by the Business Administrator.

10. Old Business

a. Legislation

Dr. Kimberly Saunders reported having provided the board, through the shared Google drive, an update on legislation. Katherine Heck focused on HB 111 which will remove the indemnity should it pass. It has a greater impact on police and would allow civil suits to be placed on volunteers and public officials.

Sense of the board to voice opposition: Sense of the board was in favor to voice opposition.

Robert Short said that insurances might be looked into to cover the board should it pass.

Katherine Heck said that Primex is the district insurance company. There is no product offered greater than what we already have. Katherine said that the vote takes place on Thursday.

Rich Cahoon asked the Policy Committee to look at our indemnification policy.

b. 2nd Read/Adoption Policy

- BEDH: Public Comment & Participation

Janine Lesser moved to adopt this policy as presented. Kevin Pobst second.

Robert Short asked if a Q&A would be a part of this. It will be separate.

Unanimous.

- KE: Process for Complaints

Janine Lesser moved to adopt this policy as presented. Kevin Pobst second.

Kevin asked what changes were needed. Katherine Heck said that we had two policies that cross referenced each other but had different intents. A review to ensure that bases were covered and separate them out took place.

Unanimous.

- BDE: Committee Organization & Assignments

This policy was withdrawn from the agenda for a second read/adoption.

11. New Business

a. Accept Gift/Donation (Board Vote Required)

- 1) Peterborough Elementary School requests authorization to accept from: Jessica Fahrenholtz via Comcast Employee Incentive Program, a check in the amount of \$586.50 for the purpose of purchasing drawstring bags to transport student Chromebooks to and from school.

Katherine Heck moved to accept the donation with great appreciation. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

b. Budget Transfers (Board Vote Required) – Lori Schmidt

Lori referenced the transfers. They reflect clean-up transfers to realign where the expenses are charged.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the transfers. Second. Unanimous.

c. Expenditure and Encumbrance Report – Lori Schmidt

Lori said that this report is a monthly report that should come at the second meeting each month. This report reflects everything in alignment except property services as a result of tents.

Rich Cahoon moved to accept the report and any encumbrances therein. Dick Dunning second.

Kevin Pobst asked Lori Schmidt to identify each of the columns and what they represent. Lori reviewed the document.

Unanimous.

d. Middle School Athletics Proposal

Rich Cahoon moved to accept the Middle School Athletics Proposal. Katherine Heck second.

Robert Short, Jr. asked why the proposal mentions 6 feet if the CDC requires 3 ft. The response was that the proposal came in prior to CDC change.

Kevin Pobst asked about the mask requirement during competition. When John Reitnauer presented the high school plan, he said that the DII Athletic Director's would be meeting and they would make agreements for mask protocols. Kevin said that he wondered if that changed or if masks were embraced.

John Reitnauer said that middle schools are under the Principal's Association and not the NHIAA. When the middle school proposal was asked for, the guidance looked at the high school requirements and landed there. As far as DII, Athletic Directors comply with wearing masks the entire spring season.

Dick Dunning asked if we can vote to make a change from 6 ft to 3 ft.

Dick Dunning moved to change from 6 ft. to 3 ft. for the athletic recommendation for the middle school.

Robert Short, Jr. second.

Janine Lesser asked if the CDC guidance applied to sports. Robert Short, Jr. noted that everyone would be masked.

Vote on amendment to change from 6 to 3 ft.

Unanimous to change from 6 to 3 ft.

Vote to adopt middle school athletic plan as amended. Unanimous.

e. High School Co-Curricular Proposal

Katherine Heck moved to adopt the high school co-curricular proposal. Dick Dunning second.

Second sentence in proposal section should be stricken that references cohorts.

Unanimous.

f. Last Day of School – Recommendation June 17, 2021

Dr. Kimberly Saunders referenced Policy IC where 180 days are scheduled. Kimberly shared that we are in excess of hours required per year at each level. This reflects the recommendation for the last day of school to be June 17, 2021.

Dick Dunning moved to accept the recommendation that June 17, 2021 is the last day of school for students.

Stephen Ullman second. Unanimous.

12. Public Comment

Tim Theberge has discussed holding a Q & A session. The format, on how it would be moderated, how debate would be avoided, how often it would be held, is it a separate event, were a few of the questions posed.

Robert Short suggested that questions from the public be emailed to allow an accurate and precise response take place. A live Q&A might be problematic timewise. The responses would be on the agenda and posted as part of an evolving Q&A.

Rich Cahoon said that the problem with a preformed Q&A does not allow the board as a whole to confirm.

Kevin Pobst said that the one on one response makes the most sense. But, the dialogue is important too. The best environment is to answer questions in the individual towns.

Jim Fredrickson shared concern with the quantity and quality of the questions. How would it be limited?

Janine Lesser said that originally, a quarterly public forum was discussed for this purpose.

Katherine Heck said that multiple ways to engage the public are important. All of the opportunities being available would increase communication. She was in favor of multiple platforms of communication.

Rich Cahoon said that administration can answer a question that the board may not be able to.

Janine Lesser and Dick Dunning shared information about a recent meeting they held with residents to hear concerns. He said that it is valuable for board members to simply acknowledge receipt of an email.

A communication suggestion was asked to be drafted by the Communication Committee.

Tim Theberge opened up time to a second period of public comment. There were none.

13. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Lori Schmidt certified that manifests listed totaling \$2,823,685.84 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.

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

a. Negotiations

b. Legal

c. Personnel

Rich Cahoon moved to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for negotiations and personnel at 9:42 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

Dick Dunning motioned to exit non-public session at 10:24 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.

Janine Lesser moved to seal the minutes of non-public session for a period of ten years. Rich Cahoon second. Unanimous.

Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 10:25 p.m. Robert Short, Jr. second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok