

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

**CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD**

**School Board Meeting**

**Thursday, August 17, 2021  
7:00 p.m.**

**Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room**

**Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIDXJGf5ksY>**

**Minutes**

**BOARD**

Rich Cahoon, Keira Christian,  
Richard Dunning, Jim Fredrickson,  
Katherine Heck, Greg Kriebel,  
Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,  
Liz Swan, Tim Theberge,  
Stephen Ullman, Jerry Wilson

**ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.  
Lori Schmidt, B.A.  
Colleen Roy, GES  
Nicole Pease, DCS/HES  
Larry Pimental, PES  
Kat Foecking, GBS  
Tim Conway, SMS  
Beth Gibney, Pierce/FES

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

**Tim Theberge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**

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

**a. Student**

**Janine Lesser moved to enter into Non-Public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II at 7:00 p.m. for student matters. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Dick Dunning moved to exit non-public session at 7:23 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous. Janine Lesser moved to seal the minutes for five years. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.**

**Dr. Schoel and Dr. Niemela joined the meeting at 7:25 p.m.**

**3. Points of Pride**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders shared that school is readying to reopen.

**4. Public Comment**

Tim Theberge said that the purpose of board meetings is to conduct school business. Each speaker may speak only once and for period of two minutes. Tim Theberge read the guidelines for public comment. It is not a Q&A but rather a comment opportunity.

Alyssa Eccard, Peterborough, asked that masks be optional for children. She read statistics. She said that the CDC recommends wearing a mask and not requiring it. Children are not susceptible to COVID-19. There is no reason that children need to protect the already protected. Masking can cause anxiety and trauma. The survey results reflect near 300 children who may not return to school.

Erin Nolan, Peterborough, said that she feels confused because she feels decisions are being made on feelings and not facts. Using a regional positivity rate rather than local is confusing. She asked that decisions be made on local data. She asked that masks be optional for our children.

Stephanie Lamothe, Peterborough, said that masking works when done correctly. Most children are not great at wearing masks. They offer a false sense of security because they are likely not properly cleaned. She asked about the concern for mental health. She objects to the message being sent. She asked how this will be enforced.

Selena White, Temple, said that masking should be a choice. She said that she respects those that choose to wear masks. She cited the harm she believed that masks will result. She asked that mask wearing be a choice for children.

Caleb White, Temple, spoke about the serious thought that is required when being an elected School Board official. If this mask mandate is not reversed, his children will attend private school. The board does not have the right to force masks. He said that he is giving the board the benefit of the doubt.

Thanked the COVID Task force for moving into the green. Confusion from moving from blue to green. Many commute outside of the district. The mask matrix is reasonable and provides flexibility. Masks are a hot topic. She cited other information about mask wearing. Children mimic the sentiments of their parents. Medical decisions are made before children enter the school doors. The board has a responsibility to educate in the safest way.

Ross Kukish, Peterborough, said that he disagreed with the wearing of masks in school. He said that his daughter has a vocal issue that may be a result of wearing a mask. We are focused and driven on COVID and less on mental health, suicide, and depression. Mr. Kukish said that children cannot be focused on fear and the wearing of masks. He asked that a decision on options be allowed so that parents may choose what is best for their children.

Mackenzie, Peterborough, reported experiences with her son as a result of not being able to recognize classmates and teachers. She said that children need to see faces. It is scary for children. The only thing that stays the same are faces. Katie Cartier, Greenfield, said that she made the choice to homeschool her kids. She said that parents are entrusting board members to make decisions. She asked the board to think long and hard about their role. Will kids be scared or fearful?

## **5. Consent Agenda**

### **a. Personnel**

- 1) Nominations
- 2) Co-Curricular Notifications

The consent agenda was adopted.

## **6. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business**

### **a. Reopening Update**

Katherine Heck asked that information about how decisions were made be shared with constituents.

Masking during blue phase will be optional, during green optional outdoors. Masks may no longer be required once an optimal vaccination rate is met within the schools.

Recommendations for transition from blue to green were shared, greater than 100 and less than 500. Other information from the plan was shared. Case locations are looked at, if they are concentrated in an area. Available outdoor space is considered. Stress on local medical staff is a consideration. Cases town by town are monitored as well as staff and student absences. If we go from green to yellow based on certain data and yellow to red were outlined in terms of how those decisions would be made.

The Greater Monadnock Public Health area will be used because it is more geographically appropriate.

Kimberly Saunders said that once a community school reaches 80% vaccination rate verified, masks will no longer be required in that school. The busing requirements are federal. Masks are required on buses.

Katherine Heck asked that information about the experts that sit on the Monitoring Team be shared.

Rich Cahoon asked about the 80% threshold. We know how many people in each range are vaccinated. Can't we estimate the vaccination rate in our schools?

Census data breaks down age 15 and older and not 12 and older.

Dr. Niemela said that vaccination rates for younger have not been shared.

Rich Cahoon said that other immunizations that we require certified records are required by law and are fully approved vaccinations. Is there another way to determine vaccination rates?

Dr. Niemela said that requiring verified vaccination rates would be adequate.

Katherine Heck asked if it is both children and adults to get to the 80% threshold. Dr. Niemela said that it is a percentage of staff, faculty and students that would require 80%.

Katherine Heck asked the advice of the pediatricians present on masking.

Dr. Schoel said that the medical practice is recommending masking if you are not vaccinated or in a place that they are not. She spoke about the Delta Variant concerns.

Liz Swan asked about natural immunity. Dr. Schoel said that many people have got COVID more than once.

Rich Cahoon asked about the relative importance of masking and vaccination. Is vaccination equally, less, or more important?

Dr. Niemela said that vaccination is how we are going to get out of this pandemic. Twelve or under cannot get vaccinated. Vaccines are how we get out of this pandemic.

Rich Cahoon said that the plan says no masks are required outside. In outdoor classrooms, students do not need to wear masks. Confirmed. This edit will be incorporated into the plan.

Kevin Pobst said that we could reach an 80% vaccine rate at the high school. With the return of students who don't want to return but now do, we could fall below 80% at the high school. How do we monitor this? Verified rates will be used.

### **b. School Board Requests**

Kimberly Saunders said that School Board requests are public documents and will be included in the record of meetings.

### **c. Monthly Events Calendar**

The Monthly School Board Meeting Events Calendar was updated.

## **7. Reports**

### **a. Teacher Representative**

None.

### **b. Budget & Property Committee – Jim Fredrickson**

Jim Fredrickson referenced a summary on Budget Guidance FY22-23. Four groupings e.g. Assumptions/Conditions, Major Variables, Board Guidance Decisions, and Budget Schedule. Mr. Fredrickson touched on each of the four.

A large part of the budget cannot be impacted because it is mainly staff.  
Rich Cahoon noted the absence of “maintenance of effort”. Jim Fredrickson said that may have been an oversight.

Jim Fredrickson spoke about the Great Brook School boiler work that would be done with Trust Fund money. A Public Hearing will be required.

The board is asked to allow administration to negotiate the oil contract.

**Jim Fredrickson moved that administration negotiate the oil contract. Dick Dunning second. Rich Cahoon opposed. All else in favor. Motion carried.**

Jim Fredrickson spoke about money raised for remote learning in the amount of \$700K as a result of contractual obligations that staff were willing to give up.

Rich Cahoon spoke about compensatory service needs. He cautioned saying that this money is stuck somewhere. We released an encumbrance and retained a liability.

Kimberly Saunders said that legal advice was to release those funds as the district did do.

Jim Fredrickson said that it was agreed not to spend money on remote learning and said that \$700K should be used.

Rich Cahoon said that we agreed not to fund a remote school. If the Governor orders us to shut, money will be spent. The liability has not gone away.

**c. Communication Committee** – Janine Lesser/Alan Edelkind

Janine Lesser spoke about a response to a Letter to the Editor that required clarification.

Preparing a Q & A Video was discussed and scheduled on 9/25 and would allow communication with the public on the reopening plan. The committee will provide public information through local newspapers and letters about the availability of the video.

The details of the public forum were ironed out. The format will be voted tonight.

**d. Policy Committee** – Katherine Heck

Katherine reported having met tonight. Policy JICFA comes tonight for a first read.

DKA will be stamped as recently reviewed.

Other policies were reviewed in the area of pandemic and communicable disease that will go through legal review.

The policy on advanced coursework is under review and will go to the Equity Committee.

**8. Old Business**

**a. Legislative Update**

Katherine asked for a sense of the board to seek sponsors of the bill on adequacy adjustments to go to higher enrollments. Confirmed.

**b. Community Forum (Board Vote Required)**

Janine Lesser said that four quarterly public forums are recommended. District public would contribute. The last full week in September or the first in October is the aim for the first forum. There will be a moderator. Location is the LHT. Tech support from high school students is hoped. Tim Theberge will moderate the first forum. A survey will be sent two weeks prior to ask for the topics of concern and what they would like to hear more about. Three topics will be selected. Questions will be solicited from the general public. The second hour will be ad hoc to allow the public to ask questions of the board and administration. Moderator will present topics and share any discussion that the board may have had. It is hoped to be livestreamed and possibly recorded. This is not limited to parents or guardians but open to all community members.

Is this a public, posted meeting? Will confirm.

Motion to move forward with forums as proposed.

**Kevin Pobst moved to move forward with the forums as proposed. Greg Kriebel second. Unanimous.**

**c. School Board Goals**

Tim Theberge referenced a document that reflected original submissions and proposed goals.

**Greg Kriebel moved to accept the goal as read for the Strategic Plan that read “The Board will actively engage in the development of a Strategic Plan that is forward thinking, addresses the ConVal mission and vision, includes a defined pathway forward for consolidation/reorganization of the District schools for consideration by District voters, and a thorough identification of maintenance and capital needs for development of a bond proposal in March 2023.”**

**Katherine Heck second.**

Liz Swan asked if there are members of the public that represent all towns on the Strategic Plan, Temple and Dublin specifically. Confirmed.

Stephen Ullman said that the goals document submitted earlier for individual schools and district was exemplary. The Strategic Plan is a five year plan.

**Unanimous.**

Budget & Finance Goal –

**Greg Kriebel moved to approve the Budget & Finance Goal which read “The Board, in cooperation with the administration, will propose a budget that meets the needs of the District that we can present to the voters with full transparency and confidence”.**

**Katherine Heck second.**

The suggestion to insert the words “with sensitivity” in the goal between the words “.....the District, *with sensitivity*, that we can present....”

**Rich Cahoon second the amendment.**

Janine asked if this isn't done every year. Confirmed. Janine said that is standard practice. The board is sensitive to balancing the needs of taxpayers.

Jim Fredrickson said that two purposes of goals; redirect the board and reinforce what we have always done.

**Unanimous.**

**Vote on goal as amended – Unanimous as amended.**

Communication –

Rich Cahoon asked historically about sentence between promoting success and achievements as an administrative function.

Janine said that she took it to mean a combination of the committee and administration.

Rich said that it should not be everything. Administration is in a better position to communicate district successes.

Liz Swan asked if administration has a communication department. If not, administration should be a part of the conversation.

**Kevin Pobst moved without striking the sentence. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

Learning Recovery/Reopening –

**Kevin Pobst moved to adopt the goal “The Board will support the District’s learning recovery efforts to address the ongoing negative impact of the pandemic on the academic progress of our students.”**

**Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

Identify the District as a Provider of Pre-K through Post-Secondary Education –

Kevin Pobst said that he admired the attempt but does not think it works. Putting them together minimizes the importance of each one.

Jim Fredrickson suggested a bulleted format.

The board goal would be to support the furthering of promoting age appropriate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills....

Kevin Pobst said that he expected a community college engagement piece to be part of this.

Kimberly Saunders said that this is a value statement that covers multiple years.

Tim Theberge said that this goal needs more work.

**Stephen Ullman moved to table this further.** Nothing is more important than preschool education and its expansion. We are really talking about experiential and career oriented education.

Rich Cahoon shared his concern where one or two years of graduates did not receive the counseling they deserve. Is there a way to get this to them now; some are still around?

Approve four goals:

Steve and Kevin will work on 5<sup>th</sup> goal.

#### **d. Shea Field Agreement (Board Vote Required)**

Jim Fredrickson recommended including the amount that will be paid for maintenance.

Stephen Ullman asked if the problems have been resolved. Kimberly confirmed that issues have been resolved to satisfaction.

**Rich Cahoon moved to authorize Tim Theberge to sign on behalf of the district. Stephen Ullman second. Unanimous.**

#### **e. Antrim Town Gym Agreement (Board Vote Required)**

The agreement was referenced, which is the update to the agreement worked on previously. It updates the dates with no changes to terms.

**Katherine Heck moved to accept as presented. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

### **9. New Business**

#### **a. Policies 1<sup>st</sup> Read**

- JICFA: Hazing

This policy has come for a first read, please send comments to Katherine Heck.

#### **b. Student Handbooks**

Tim referenced handbooks uploaded to Google Drive.

**Katherine Heck moved to adopt the CVHS Handbook. Dick Dunning second. Greg Kriebel abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

**Katherine Heck moved to adopt the GBS Handbook. Dick Dunning second. Greg Kriebel abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

**Katherine Heck moved to adopt the SMS Handbook. Dick Dunning second. Greg Kriebel abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

**Katherine Heck moved to approve all elementary handbooks. Dick Dunning second. Greg Kriebel abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

**c. Expense and Encumbrances (Board Vote Required)**

**Rich Cahoon moved to accept the expense and encumbrance report. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

**d. Dublin Consolidated School Pavilion Plan**

Kimberly Saunders reported that Nicole Pease brought a plan forward to the Budget & Property Committee who supported bringing this forward. Cost would be covered with a gift in kind for labor and a gift from the Bity Foundation for materials.

Kevin Pobst asked how the District handles school specific or town specific gifts when thinking about equity. In his past, certain neighborhoods could build better playgrounds than others. A careful approach to accepting donations was taken in his past.

Rich Cahoon said that extensive conversation took place about this several years ago. To disregard the intent of the donors would cause gifts to dry up.

Kevin Pobst said that if we accept this, does it place the district in a slippery slope to do the same for other schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that this provides the opportunity to have one on school property to learn more about it and its value.

Liz Swan shared concern about placing a structure on school property when considering the Strategic Plan and potential consolidation.

Greg Kriebel asked if money is available could grants be written to do this for other schools.

Kimberly said that there is a good chance that ESSER Dollars might be used. More to come.

Rich Cahoon noted his thanks for the donation in labor.

**Rich Cahoon moved to adopt the pavilion proposal. Dick Dunning Second.**

Liz Swan said that the ramifications should be kept in mind.

Dick Dunning said that this gives the opportunity to look at the utilization of a pavilion.

The vote would be to allow the building of a pavilion and a separate vote to accept the gift.

**Unanimous.**

**e. Accept Gift/Donation (Board Vote Required)**

- 1) ConVal High School requests authorization to accept from: The Friends of ConVal Athletics, two boy's lacrosse helmets approved by the Athletic Director, valued at \$627.05 for the purpose of use by the lacrosse team for their expected useful life.

**Kevin Pobst moved to accept the gift as read. Greg Kriebel second. Katherine Heck abstained. Unanimous.**

- 2) ConVal High School requests authorization to accept from: The Friends of ConVal Athletics, Track & Field equipment, valued at \$1,233.09 for the purpose of track and field training.

**Dick Dunning moved to accept the gift as read. Greg Kriebel second. Katherine Heck abstained. Unanimous.**

- 3) Dublin Consolidated School requests the authorization to accept from the Trustees of the Bitty Foundation, \$10,000 for the purpose of creating an outdoor learning space.

Due to the dollar value of this donation, a public hearing will be required.

**f. Position Justification**

Due to the high number of kindergarten registrations at Pierce School results in one justification. An additional kindergarten teacher is requested.

**Dick Dunning moved to approve the request for an additional kindergarten teacher at Pierce School. Janine Lesser second.**

Greg Kriebel said that 6 teachers for 72 students seems like an awful lot. Is there another way to do this?

Kimberly Saunders said that any combination would exceed class sizes. A combined 3 and 4 would exceed as well as a K and 1. We traditionally do not combine 2 and 3.

Options are looked at before a new staff recommendation comes forward.

**Kevin Pobst, Greg Kriebel, and Jerry Wilson were opposed. Motion carried.**

Outdoor educational spaces require additional labor and overtime. Bringing on an additional custodial labor is asked.

Rich Cahoon said that shifting people was mentioned. These would backfill people who work here so we can shift staff to manage the outside. This is a whole year request.

Are all so intertwined. Confirmed.

**Rich Cahoon moved to authorize to move forward with an additional custodial position. Janine Lesser second.**

Line item transfers will be required.

Lori Schmidt said that budget line 120 will be impacted as well as 113 potentially. 330 would also play in.

Dick asked for clarification that funds will be found within the budget and transferred.

Kimberly Saunders said that something will have to move for this to happen.

Rich Cahoon asked if this is not a COVID mitigation proposal and fall under grant funding.

Kimberly Saunders said that it may fit into ESSER and look elsewhere as needed.

**Stephen Ullman abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

#### **10. Public Comment**

Melissa Robbins, parent of high school students, said that the board should know that the people who left feel disenfranchised because they did not know the process. It was a missed opportunity for people to feel heard. People came from work tonight and there were generations not heard. We need to come out of this with dignity. It is important to remember the relationships families have with schools. She said that it is essential that people are reached out for forums.

Alan White, Peterborough, asked about ESSER funds and if \$312K funds were used for schools.

**Katherine Heck asked the board to entertain an exception and answer the question posed to us. Rich Cahoon second.**

Kimberly Saunders said that the funds were used for mitigation strategies and additional staff with initial first round funds. Overall, with dollars spent including remote, \$3M unplanned dollars were spent. We immediately froze the budget and took what was eligible for ESSER and put it into the grant. FEMA dollars became available after ESSER and were more restrictive. We used these first and then moved related items from budget to ESSER. We did significant HVAC work and ordered ionization systems installed.

Rich Cahoon said that the only reason we were to return funds was a result of taking advantage of grants. \$3.2M was returned through lower payments required of the towns.

Jim Fredrickson noted financial articles on various topics to explain all of this.

#### **11. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)**

Lori Schmidt certified that manifests listed totaling \$1,640,131.92, 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 read. Jim Fredrickson second. Rich Cahoon abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

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

**a. Negotiations**

**b. Legal**

**c. Personnel**

**Janine Lesser moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II for a student matter at 9:47 p.m. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**Dick Dunning moved to exit non-public session at 9:59 p.m. Janine Lesser second. Unanimous.**

**Janine Lesser moved to approve the two requests as shared. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.**

**Janine Motion to approve the practice of using the Free and Reduced Lunch school application to determine the eligibility for preschool tuition remission eligibility. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

**Rich Cahoon moved to seal the minutes of non-public session on a student matter for 10 years.**

**Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.**

**Stephen Ullman motioned to adjourn at 10:02 p.m. Keira Christian second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok