

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire
CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room

Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yx0BHpysOxY>

Minutes

BOARD

Rich Cahoon (e), Tom Burgess,
Keira Christian, Richard Dunning,
Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson,
Katherine Heck, Greg Kriebel,
Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,
Liz Swan, Tim Theberge,
Stephen Ullman

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Lori Schmidt, B.A.
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.
Cari Christian-Coates, Student Serv.
Kat Foecking, GBS
Larry Pimental, PES
Nicole Pease, DCS

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)

None.

3. Points of Pride

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

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes

1) January 4, 2022

b. Personnel

The Consent Agenda was adopted as presented.

6. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Reopening Update

Kimberly Saunders reported that positive numbers continue to rise around COVID. Numbers in the region and State continue to be high.

b. Monthly Events Calendar

Public Hearings to expend trust funds were scheduled for Tuesday, February 15th beginning at 7:00 p.m.

7. Reports

a. Teacher Representative – Cheryl Jessie

None.

b. Education Committee – Stephen Ullman

Stephen Ullman reported that the main business was to revise and approve a new version of Policy IKF. State mandates drove some of the change. The Community Service requirement for high school graduation was removed. Community service is still a core value at the high school.

Incorporating the State required passing of the Civics Exam to graduate was discussed. State Legislature also requires students to complete the FAFSA to graduate. The committee is working on several policies.

c. Communication Committee – Janine Lesser/Alan Edelkind

Alan Edelkind reported that an update on the Community Forum was discussed. Alan thanked everyone for their participation. Copies of the communication distribution and the agenda for the forum have been shared. The meeting will be livestreamed. The budget presentation will be done by Jim Fredrickson and Katherine Heck. The second presentation and Q&A will be done by Rich Cahoon on the topic of preschool expansion.

d. Budget & Property Committee – Jim Fredrickson

Jim Fredrickson shared key takeaways – bond for next year; milestone plan underway. This will be married with CTE renovation. Capital Improvement Plan Policy completion is the third topic.

e. Policy Committee – Katherine Heck

Katherine Heck reported that Policy IKF will come forward for a first read.

FAA has been sent to the Budget & Property Committee for their review and recommendation. This will allow for long term planning.

Policy prioritization took place.

Katherine Heck reported that she will be asking for the waiver and adoption of a policy under new business tonight.

f. Student Representative – Abby Kamieniecki

None.

8. Old Business

a. Legislative Update

Tim Theberge reported that hearings are underway. Tim reported having sent the board the latest update by email.

Tom Burgess spoke about the potential to meet with State representatives. He said that he would like to see this happen.

Katherine Heck reported that Rep Ricciardi is willing to meet. Meeting by Zoom is also an option. Other representatives can be asked to meet as well.

b. School Board Requests

Lori Schmidt reported that a board request was submitted asking that information about the impact of each warrant article.

“Raise and appropriate” raises new money and is an increase to the net assessment.

Using surplus funds has a zero-net impact on assessment. It uses revenues to fund trusts rather than reduce the tax rate.

c. Revised Budget Discussion

Revised budget documents were distributed.

Lori Schmidt spoke about ESSER funds. She asked legal what happens in the event of a default. Funds would be appropriated, it would pass, and then would be included in the default. After verifying dates, the award was made late for ESSER III. None of the appropriations were included in the 2022 budget. Legal was pondering this as well.

It is unanticipated revenue. A public hearing is necessary to accept the grant award. Appropriations are non-lapsing. It should not be included in the revenue and the appropriations have been reduced by \$1.5M in the budget and revenue reporting.

At the public hearing, the full grant award will be accepted for over \$3M and ESSER II will be accepted as well. The monies will be used and reimbursed as that occurs.

The impact on the default budget was shared. It drops it back down to \$1,072,778.

Keira Christian asked about the funds previously voted for remote school that did not move forward.

Those dollars, in part, will show up in unanticipated fund balance at the end of this school year.

For the budget setting forward, the differences can be found in salaries, retirement, and all other lines that remote school would have impacted.

Jim Fredrickson asked to assume that \$500K wasn't going to be spent as a result of no remote and give it back at the end of the year. He proposed increasing the proposed 2022-2023 unreserved fund balance. Larger amounts in unreserved fund balance will push down district assessment.

Rich Cahoon said that over the course of several years, the unreserved fund balance was ratcheted down at the request of the towns. It leaves ConVal in a situation to keep fluctuating from year to year.

Kimberly Saunders said that the \$250K can be increased. If you put it in that box, you have to return it. This happens at the end of the proposed budget in 2023. The year 2023 is the first opportunity to retain a specific amount.

Jim Fredrickson said that when looking at the fiscal year 2021-2022 budget, it included \$205K unused funds. \$4M was returned.

This year, we anticipate \$250K that will be unused from the current fiscal year. We have \$780K for remote that we know that we aren't going to expend.

Lori Schmidt said that the budget is built with a \$250K return. If we increase it we would have to give back \$750K next year.

Katherine Heck said that in 21/22, in June, we have the opportunity to commit fund balance dollars and it would go on the November tax rate. Next year's budget has \$250K committed. If we change the number, it has to come from somewhere.

There is no more remote school. There is no fund balance that we can count on because it was an approved budget. She did not recommend changing the unreserved fund balance for the 2022/2023 budget.

Tim Theberge said that the status of the preschool discussion remains. It is up for discussion. Should it go forward in the budget or as a separate warrant article?

\$566,274.00 is the revised recommendation by administration.

Katherine Heck moved that \$566,274.00 be moved out of the proposed operating budget and included as a separate warrant article to allow voters to decide for themselves.

Greg Kriebel second.

Kimberly Saunders said that \$744,112 is in the budget.

Katherine Heck amended her motion to remove \$744,112 from the proposed operating budget and include it in a separate warrant article to allow a total of 8 preschool classrooms.

Liz Swan second.

Jim Fredrickson noted that there are five preschool options before the board.

There are two questions, which option, and should it be a separate warrant article. He said that Katherine's proposal is for \$744,112, which is the full proposal. Should the \$566,274 be the figure used? No, \$744,112.

Jim Fredrickson said that there is a miscommunication. There are five options to look at.

The motion included two parts that would be voted. There is only one option on the floor.

Rich Cahoon asked if we put the entire \$744,112 on a warrant article and it does not pass, it includes the additional OT. Should we avoid the "no means no" by budgeting for part of it?

Kimberly Saunders said that if we are not moving toward an expanded program, then we would look at the needs that we have in the classrooms. If there were a need, it would be addressed.

Rich Cahoon said that if we are going to kill it, we should have the courage to kill it.

Rich Cahoon opposed the motion.

Kevin Pobst said that he hears that currently we are staffed for four rooms and not five.

Rich Cahoon said that if this is a warrant article and is voted down, we would not be able to hire an OT.

Kevin Pobst asked if administration would scale back the number of seats to four instead of five as a result of staffing.

Stephen Ullman said that if the warrant article for \$744K were to be defeated what would remain of the Pre-K program. The response was that it would remain at the current level of five rooms, exactly as it is today.

Liz Swan asked that if the preschool is included in the budget and the budget fails, what does that mean.

Kimberly Saunders said that it would be up to the board after deliberative session.

Liz asked Rich Cahoon about the gap the board might be missing.

Rich Cahoon said that we do not have time to make a full case for the preschool program. When we have talked in the past about contentious topics, it was discussed much earlier on to allow time to build the case over a course of months.

Janine Lesser said that the difference is that if it is a warrant article, it is much more possible to vote down.

Katherine Heck said that if the board is not doing their job it will be voted down even if it is included in the budget. The public is listening. They want to be part of a decision making process.

Rich Cahoon said that if it makes no difference we would include it in the budget. If we place it separate it is to allow it to be voted against.

Janine Lesser said that the full cost came in the budget within the percentage increase recommended by the board to the Superintendent. In addition, the Superintendent came in with a lower cost option.

Keira Christian noted that the preschool will be funded by the towns regardless of whether or not any students from that town attend.

Janine Lesser said that part of the reason for the expansion is to allow more access to preschool.

A change to the warrant will increase the amount between the proposed operating budget and the default. The default would increase.

Lori Schmidt said that the default would be \$1.6M as a result of the removal of positions.

Kevin Pobst asked that the default did not include newly created positions. Aren't these new?

No, they are reassigned positions.

Katherine Heck asked for a legal opinion on the default. Kimberly Saunders said that we always get a legal opinion.

Dick Dunning said that we have asked the public to support this program. We asked for a program within a certain percentage increase. We know that getting to kids early has an impact on students and can reduce costs. We have asked the public to support this and they have. He does not support this as an amendment to a warrant article but included in the proposed budget.

Liz Swan clarified that she supports preschool but she also represents her town. She will advocate for preschool either way. She disagreed that enough time is not available to educate the public on it being included in the budget and as a separate warrant article. She is concerned about the budget not passing this year. She feels that people should have a choice. She sees a value in the additional choice of a separate warrant article.

Greg Kriebel second what both Liz Swan and Dick Dunning have said. He said that preschool is important and that he understands the need for early intervention. He said that his issue is that we are asking for a luxury item when a less expensive scaled down version could be selected. It should be a separate warrant article to allow the voters to decide.

Jim Fredrickson said that we are not out to kill preschool. It is a matter of how it goes forward.

Tim Theberge called the question in favor of moving the \$744,112 out of budget and into a separate warrant. A yes vote removes the warrant article and a no vote retains the warrant article:

In favor: Tim Theberge, Rich Cahoon, Janine Lesser

Opposed: Jim Fredrickson, Tom Burgess, Stephen Ullman, Dick Dunning, Alan Edelkind, Liz Swan, Greg Kriebel, Keira Christian, Katherine Heck, Kevin Pobst

The vote prevails and it will be moved to a separate warrant article.

A five-minute break was called at 8:10 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:20 p.m.

The budget will go down by \$744,112 and there will be a new default.

d. Policy 2nd Read/Adoption (Board Vote Required)

- DGA: Authorized Signatures

Keira Christian moved to accept as presented. Greg Kriebel second. Unanimous.

9. New Business

a. Expenditure and Encumbrance Report – Lori Schmidt

Lori Schmidt reported on the expense and encumbrance report included in the board packet.

Jim Fredrickson moved to approve the expenditure report and encumbrances therein.

Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

b. Review of Warrant

A warrant article will be added for the preschool. Jim Fredrickson proposed that it be Article 04. The remainder would be renumbered from there.

Tim Theberge provided proposed wording for the newly numbered Article 05: Established and Appropriate to Technology Fund. *Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Contoocook Valley School District Energy Trust Fund, previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2022 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2022, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.)*

Dick Dunning moved forward with the recommendation. Katherine Heck second. Unanimous.

Katherine Heck said that it is recommended that a policy be waived on an emergency basis. Policy ACAC is the referred policy. Under Policy BGF we would suspend the BGA and GBAA

Unanimous decision of the board is required.

The first motion is by Katherine Heck to waive BGA. No objection. BGA was waived.

Katherine Heck moved to adopt Policy ACAC. Kevin Pobst. Unanimous.

Katherine Heck moved to suspend Policies BGF, JBAA, GBAA which are included in ACAC. No student or staff are left open to any issue or concern. Stephen Ullman second.

ACAC will go to policy and legal review.

Unanimous.

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Lori Schmidt certified that manifests listed totaling \$2,751,297.47 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. Unanimous.

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

a. Negotiations

b. Legal

c. Personnel

None.

Greg Kriebel motioned to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok