

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

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Meeting

**Tuesday, December 19, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Physical Location: SAU #1 Board Room

Livestream Link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ConValEvents>

Minutes

BOARD

William Bryk, Tom Burgess
Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind,
Jim Fredrickson, Dan Harper,
Katherine Heck, Michael Hoyt,
Thomas Kirlin, Greg Kriebel,
Janine Lesser, Erin Pils-Martin,
Liz Swan

Lucy Jackson, Student Rep.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.
Tim Grossi, Facilities
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.
Adam Caragher, GBS
Brian Cisneros, B.A.
Tim Conway, SMS
Beth Gibney, AES
Rachel Hill, FES

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Dick Dunning called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Points of Pride

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

In addition, Dick Dunning shared that the Superintendent, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, was nominated and selected as Superintendent of the Year in the State of New Hampshire.

In addition, Dr. Saunders is one of four finalists for National Superintendent of the year out of 50 states.

Dick Dunning shared that Tim Grossi is proud of the lights at the high school and how bright they are. He shared a story about the lights accidentally being powered off since installed.

3. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Brian Cisneros certified that manifests totaling \$2,794,634.62 have been reviewed by him 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.

Jim Fredrickson motioned to approve the Manifests as read. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.

4. Public Comment

Dick Dunning opened Public Comment. He said that the public may address the board for a time of two minutes. Anyone commenting should state their name and town please for the public record.

Christy Greene asked if this is the only opportunity for Public Comment. Dick Dunning replied that there are two opportunities tonight.

Gary Gorski, Peterborough Planning Board, said that he has spent time addressing work underway. He spoke about the number of houses for sale in the entirety of ConVal. He spoke about a housing project being planned in Peterborough. He shared information about projected growth in populations. He said that elementary education enrollment will be growing. He urged not to close schools.

John Wood, Dublin, said that no institution will remain successful without adapting. He spoke about the infrastructure needed to support it. Closure and reconfiguration can have profound effects. The community is struggling to understand the net impact. He said that he understands this has been attempted many times. He said that you do not have the taxpayers, administrators, and teachers support. He asked the board to consider their vote tonight. What happens when you don't get 2/3's vote? How does this help the community if it fails as it has before?

Shawn Kelliher, spoke about his son enrolled in Pre-K and is thriving in his environment. In the last month he has grown. He thanked the board for everything.

Liz Swan, Temple, said that she was in the boardroom five years ago trying to understand why the board was trying to close Temple Elementary School. She didn't understand so many things that prompted this. Over five years she said that she has seen the benefits and shortcomings of small schools and the disparities among the schools. She does not believe that the town dies if a school closes but rather the failure to progress. She shared that she has listened and that from her perspective she believes that we have to believe the "why" deeper than the data and to move forward things have to change.

Jay Schacter, Dublin, said that he had the goal to educate himself on the proposal for reconfiguration or consolidation. He said that there are two issues; we are not currently able to offer a world class education. Absent change, it will continue to deteriorate. He learned that ConVal has higher local education assessment, 21% above the peer average. Other statistics were shared. Beginning salary for ConVal is below average. Demographic trends are not favorable. Lower class size does not translate to higher test scores and success. In order to make change, the ConVal Board has committed to allowing parents to choose from a large or small school, afterschool programs, no layoffs of staff, among other items. The potential for savings is great. He said that he has listened to parents and some students have benefited from small classes. Parents chose to criticize the demographic study which should not distract from the validity of the study. He did not hear concern for fellow taxpayers, how the school would afford to maintain or increase educational offerings. Any business operating at 50% capacity would go out of business. Sooner or later, taxpayers will reject the budget. Rejection will force a default budget. 83% of the budget are salaries and benefits. He said that he listens to the struggle of board members. You ran for positions to give something to students. There is a responsibility to those that don't attend these meetings and to children. Postponing this will kill this process. It has not worked in the past and forces a future board to address a dire situation. ConVal is heading toward a financial cliff. Will the board and public continue over the cliff? He thanked the Board.

Christy Greene, Dublin, thanked the board for what they do, it is not an easy job. It is a multi-faceted and difficult decision. We are closer to reconfiguration than ever before. More work is needed before a vote is put before the voters. She sees a lack of consensus, there is not enough time. What will be done with the buildings? How will this be figured out? She urged another warrant article that outlines the steps required for this to happen. Hopefully, a consensus will result. She said that COVID had an impact on test scores.

Greg Kriebel, Peterborough, father of two former ConVal students that graduated from small Peterborough Elementary School (PES). They (his kids) were known by all of the staff, principals, and had similar experiences that parents have shared that their students have in smaller schools. PES may be a larger school but he never felt his kids were a number. Having multiple classes of the same age allowed them to prepare for middle and high school. He offered reassurance that PES is not a big school.

5. Reports

a. Teacher's Representative

Becca McLean, SMS art, Christina Weston, Special Education at SMS were present to speak about the cool things going on at SMS. Of those, 7th grade veterans' breakfast, culture club meeting with kids to look at culture of school, PBIS rewards to reward learners for demonstrating expectations, robotics competition, 8th grade science features a warm water fish tank and having completed a brochure on the ecosystem among other cool things.

Christina Weston said that students spend six weeks learning about the cost of living, preparing a resume, and other important skills. Grade 5 is working on a comedy club for announcements. A reading challenge for students and staff to read 40 books by the end of the year is in place. Lastly, math acceleration team students are requesting another rotation after they complete theirs.

b. Student Representative – Lucy Jackson

Lucy Jackson reported that the Wrestling Team had their first home meet recently. This week in Anatomy & Physiology, students are dissecting sheep brains. This spring, a trip to Montreal with over 70 senior students will take place. Currently, there is a band and choir concert going on right now.

c. Policy Committee Meeting – Katherine Heck

Katherine Heck reported that two policies will come forward for a first read on January 2nd. Sorting and prioritizing policies that have been with committees or groups will be reviewed.

Thirty-six policies from the Fall update need review in addition to others.

d. Selectmen's Advisory Committee- Alan Edelkind

Katherine Heck reported that each member town can send a governing member from their community to SAC meetings. Potential upcoming costs were discussed and the potential reconfiguration/consolidation project. Opinions were shared on the report.

e. Budget & Property Committee – Jim Fredrickson

Jim Fredrickson reported that Budget & Property Committee met just prior to this meeting tonight. Jim reported that Lavallee Brensinger was brought in to look at improvements to the middle school, high school, and CTE. In March 2025, a \$44M bond project will be proposed, with some monies coming from the State. The School Board approved submitting the application.

The Technology Plan was discussed in conjunction with a replacement cycle. Trust Funds and anticipated expenditures were discussed as well.

6. Consent Agenda

a. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes

- 1) December 5, 2023

b. Personnel

- 1) 2023-2024 Co-Curricular Notifications

The Consent Agenda was accepted.

7. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. Monthly Events Calendar

The monthly events calendar was reviewed. Committee Chairs were asked to update the calendar by sending dates of meetings to Brenda Marschok.

Kimberly Saunders said that there are School Board positions up in March; see Brenda Marschok for more information on that.

b. School Board Requests

Kimberly Saunders reported that there are no outstanding requests.

8. Old Business

a. FY'25 Proposed Budget

Jim Fredrickson referenced revenue and cost sheets.

Potential additions to the budget that have not been discussed recently need consideration.

The Operational Budget is \$55.7M; \$2.4M in federal programs with the Proposed Gross Budget at \$57.6M.

District Assessment reflects a 7.5% increase. It includes taking \$500K out of the Health Trust Fund to offset health insurance increases. \$372K in additions need discussion.

Kimberly Saunders said that there are four additions that are asked:

- ESP Clinical Coordinator to support students that would likely be sent out of district - \$0 increase
Ben Moenter said that the overall goal is that we have had an out of district coordinator in grant funding. This person would be skilled in mental health and leadership and build the quality of programming and transitions for students. Other services (YESS) would be reduced with this addition.
Janine Lesser asked about the zero impact on the budget.
Kimberly said that over 10 years, this would cost \$40M for outplacement of students. It would be a zero dollar impact this year.
Tom Burgess asked about the offset resulting in zero-dollar impact and the reduction of YESS services.
Ben Moenter spoke about the reasons for the shift. We are not getting consistent staffing from YESS; they are not able to transport students. It limits what YESS can do. Having someone hands on in the program meets our students and program needs.
Katherine Heck moved to accept this addition to the budget that is a non-monetary position in the ConVal Community.
Greg Kriebel seconded. Unanimous.
- Reading Interventionist at AES - needed for students who are struggling with reading (previously in ESSER) is being asked to be funded in the budget in the amount of \$93K. The goal was shared which is aggressive. In order to reach the goal, we need interventionists costing \$186K

Greg Kriebel moved to approve this recommendation. William Bryk seconded.

Katherine Heck asked if someone could speak more about this.

Kimberly Saunders said that we have had this position with ESSER funds and need it to continue.

Beth Gibney, AES Principal, shared that it is currently impacted greatly and allows partnering with teachers to identify students who need this support and drill down in data. This supports direct instruction of teachers to help them to learn more about comprehensive strategies. There is a direct correlation with behaviors and ability to access curriculum reflects in a decrease in adverse behaviors while receiving services. This would be funded by the district or the position would go away.

Janine Lesser said that the board knew this would be a possibility and 7.73% would be the new District Assessment increase should this position be approved.

Unanimous.

- Full Time Technology Integration Specialist at GBS - have been performed by one person(Media Specialist and Tech Integration Specialist); \$93K addition. Goals set at AES and GBS require these staff members. Kimberly Saunders reminded the board that GBS will not make the goals associated with it should these two positions not be approved. Currently, there are 47 students who need to move into higher scoring in math and 20 who need to move above the 50% percentile. We need this position.

Two 1.0 intervention teachers are asked -

Janine Lesser moved to approve these positions. William Bryk seconded.

Katherine Heck asked for more information.

Adam Caragher said that two intervention positions will provide assistance to have a significant impact and meet with students to make gains. It is a lot and this extra help is needed. It is an incredibly important time as they work toward the benchmark of algebra at the high school and potentially open up other areas of math.

This is for two positions; one math one reading.

Jim Fredrickson said that he hears the rationale but at some point- we are sitting at a 7.7% increase in taxes. We just signed with the Union on a proposed increase in contract which will be a separate warrant article proposing a \$1.23M increase in the budget. They have a three-year contract and this will impact salaries for a starting teacher right out of school at \$50K.

Jim Fredrickson said that we cannot afford everything.

If the warrant article for the Union passes, it will result in an 11% increase in District Assessment. The Operational Budget will go up if passed.

Katherine Heck asked if these are currently funded in ESSER or new to the district.

Kimberly Saunders said that they are new to the district. Cuts were made to bring this forward.

Katherine said that a very reasonable budget was brought forward in November. She has made many decisions to make cuts in the budget. The reconfiguration would save money that would allow these types of positions to be brought into the budget. Katherine said that she supports this as a result of goals adopted that have expected high educational outcomes.

Mike Hoyt said that he realizes what it is like to teach students math in high school absent fundamental background knowledge. These interventionists will make the difference for a lot of kids who cannot pass math in high school.

Tom Kirlin agreed.

Unanimous.

Integration Specialist - Dr. Ann Forrest said GBS used to have a full-time technology integrator and library media specialist. The budget was reduced as a result of a scenario where two staff might fill the position. It is not working well. It is a lot to put on any one person to put responsibilities on them. GBS is a 1:1 and it is a lot.

Adam Caragher, GBS, said that technology has not shrunk in its scope. It has a significant impact on students.

William Bryk moved to accept the proposal. Jim Fredrickson seconded.

Tom Kirlin said that GBS needs this and deserves this.

Tom Burgess asked if SMS has separate library and tech staff members. Confirmed.

Greg Kriebel asked if there is a way that the SMS person could support GBS and make this work.

Tim Conway, SMS Principal, said that when we looked for a new tech integrator several years ago discussion about how huge the job is was discussed. Making sure that technology is integrated into the classrooms is a huge job. It is a big position.

Dick Dunning said that it is not workable in his opinion. It is not a viable option. It is also a matter of equity. He would not support sharing. It speaks about what it costs to run a district.

Ann Forrest said that the purposeful use of technology is a major part of the Strategic Plan. We don't want our students to sit in front of screens being consumers but rather help with the ability to collaborate and learn. We use the Google Suite for learning. The tech integrator becomes a critical role in supporting staff. Katherine Heck supported this motion but shared her concern for the budget. We have adopted a new Strategic Plan with this as one of the goals. Not funding is a disservice to students and staff.

Unanimous.

Jim Fredrickson said that we are at more than a 4% increase in the operational budget and 8.4% in District Assessment, not counting the teacher's contract.

Liz Swan said that these positions are 100% necessary. When the board puts a budget forward we know it puts an extra ask on our communities. She echoed that this is one of the reasons we need to pay attention to where we are going in the future and how we get there.

Jim Fredrickson shared that there may be an additional \$70K available that could offset the budget.

Kimberly Saunders said that the proposed budget could be amended on January 2nd or at the Deliberative Session.

Katherine Heck said that we have a Public Hearing as well as Deliberative Session. It would reduce the budget or would not increase. .

Katherine Heck asked if trust funds were pulled out, stipends were cut early in the fall, and supplies were cut. Confirmed.

Jim Fredrickson said that no new programs were added and the Operational Budget is up 4%.

Brian Cisneros said that the Operational Budget is \$56,000,749.00

Jim Fredrickson moved to approve the Operational Budget for FY'25 for \$56,000,749. It is up 4.05% over this year.

Katherine Heck seconded.

Unanimous.

The Board broke for a five-minute break at 8:22 p.m.

The board reconvened at 8:28 p.m.

Jim Fredrickson shared discussion about project trust fund balances for seven funds.

Projected balance and what are proposed to be added for the seven trusts is:

Special Education Trust - Current Projected Balance is \$657K; proposed to take \$4K out and no more needed.

Technology Trust - Projected Balance is \$178K; proposed to take \$85K out this year; propose to add \$50K back in.

Building Trust Fund - Projected Balance is \$1.9M after paying for parking lot and lights; proposed to \$500K (2nd article) in and take \$736K out. This would appear again further down on the warrant (6th warrant) for \$200K.

Athletics Fund - no proposal to add to.

Health Trust - Projected Balance is \$590K; proposed to take \$500K out of trust fund to cover real expenses.

Propose to put \$350K back in and place first on warrant.

Equipment Trust - Balance is \$194K; Propose to take \$52K out this year and take out \$114K next year. Proposed to add \$25K back in.

Energy Efficient Trust - Projected Balance is \$330K, put in place to buyout the solar project in 2026. Add \$50K is proposed.

This would result in a vote on \$1.2M trust fund articles at the January 2nd School Board meeting.

This is unexpended funds at the end of the year that are used to replenish trust funds. They are placed on the warrant in the order that they would be funded if funds are available. Should there not be funds they would not be replenished.

b. Consolidation/Reconfiguration

Dick Dunning said that a decision of the Board is needed tonight to place it on the warrant.

Dan Harper moved the following: We as the ConVal School Board recommend that the ConVal School District vote to support the recommendation of the Prismatic Services in its report to ConVal to close Temple Elementary School, Francestown Elementary School, Dublin Elementary School, and Bennington Elementary School with the following modifications:

Implementation of this recommendation would be changed to provide for a phased or multi-year approach as follows:

Phase 1. School Year 2024-2025: Allow for the analysis and determined approach to the closing of an identified school. Determine all requirements for making the implementation as successful and seamless as possible and to provide for contingencies.

Phase 2. School Year 2025-2026: Implement the closing of the above determined elementary school with criteria for success identified. Monitor the success of the closing of the elementary school according to the success requirements provided for.

Phase 3. School Year 2026-2027: Based on the above monitoring and resulting analysis, if so determined, continue with the closing of the remaining identified elementary schools either all in this school year or some variation in this school year. Monitor the success of the above closings, adjust closing success criteria and methodology continue with closing through the subsequent school year if required.

Phase 4. School Year 2027-2028: Continue with closing and monitoring plan as required.

Phase 5. School Year 2028-2029: Continue with closing and monitoring plan as required.

Alan Edelkind second.

William Bryk moved to table the motion.

Tom Kirlin seconded.

Dick Dunning said that tabling means that the board would not vote.

Liz Swan asked why we are making a motion to table.

William Bryk said that he does not favor the substance of the motion. He has been open minded but shared concerns that he has and have been expressed suggest to him that we should not do this. He strongly believes that we should not do this.

In favor of tabling: Tom Kirlin, William Bryk

Opposed: All others.

No abstentions.

Motion failed.

Continue with the original motion.

Jim Fredrickson requested copies of the motion.

Katherine Heck said that she dove into the report and she is waiting to discuss the report itself rather than have motions. She would like to exhaust discussion on the report.

Dick Dunning asked if there are questions, comments, thoughts from board members?

Katherine Heck shared concerns about comments about population from the public and the report. We use NESDEC which is a specific demographer that looks at school age children. She looked at various sources and she said that from April 2020 to July 2023, there was an increase of 1.8% in urban areas. In 2013, the Carsey School study reflected NH having the smallest gain in history. Population growth was slow to grow. More people are dying than are born. In 2023, US Census 2010 to 2022 growth was reliant on people moving from other states. Deaths outnumber the number of births. All indications are that NESDEC can be relied on. The state's population would have declined without migration.

Katherine Heck said that it was asked if people come, where will they go. Looking at ConVal enrollment from 2006 to 2023, 35.44% of students have been lost. Looking at real estate as of November compared to May to look at how many students come in and out. ConVal had a net loss and variance every single year. There was a gain of 15 students. These students can be absorbed. She assures the public that she has done her own analysis and research and aggregated the data.

Tom Burgess shared some of his research on enrollment. He said that he was concerned about the report and contradictions shared by Mr. Gorski's research. Tom said that he met with several individuals about the report. There is a lot of enthusiasm for affordable housing. Ivy Vann said that the overall chances of passing a substantial amount of affordable housing is slim. 125 units have been approved and many are single bedroom units. This

would not add to the overall school age population. Bill Kennedy said that he did not feel the school age population would be growing substantially. Principal and Assistant Principal report that if every student from Dublin Elementary and Temple Elementary School opted to go to Peterborough Elementary School, they would be at two thirds capacity. PES said that they were comfortable with additional students and would be educationally appropriate. Tom Burgess further said that what is happening right now we have five nurses for eight elementary schools. We don't have a nurse in every school all of the time. It is a risk that we are taking. It is not mandated. He said that he was an itinerant staff and we lost out on educational time when this happened because he was driving to go back and forth between the schools.

Mike Hoyt said that when he was an elementary school principal, there was a budget crisis and a decision was made to close an elementary school resulting in an influx at his school. We made sure that the change that was being made was made as well as possible to let people get used to the fact that it was going to be different for them and to allow that everyone's needs would be met.

Mike said that he has spoken with a lot of people in his town and they are very opposed to closing the elementary school. He said that he felt that, as a Board member, he needed to represent their interest. The opposition is there. But, as a board member, going through all of the budgetary things, if we don't do something right now to change the way things are going, we are going to be in the same situation as he once was. The key to making change, which will hopefully improve education because of the savings, that the process needs to be worked on. This is something that we really need to do.

Dan Harper said that this is a gradual phasing in. He shared his research. He said that his wife is a labor and delivery nurse at Monadnock Community Hospital and births have gone from 500-600 a year to under 300 and many are from out of town.

Tom Kirilin opposes this because he was underwhelmed at the proposed savings. We do not know the social cost. He has spoken with many different groups and the gross majority do not want a consolidation.

Liz Swan said that living in a small town, this is not something that she has come to with what she knows in terms of where we need to go in order to make progress in the future. It is a very personal feeling and change is very hard. Many in her town do not want to see this happen but there are a great many that do want to see this happen. It is important to look at all of the facts. With regard to this motion, she is reluctant to approve it the way that it is written but she approves of this. We are living in a completely different economic and educational environment. The State has limitations with how education is funded. We need to make progress and need to work with what we have and be smart with our resources. This is not necessarily about saving money, it is about the quality of education and quality of teachers that we can attract to this district. It is not about the feeling of a small school. It is a wonderful feeling but it is also a wonderful feeling to go to Peterborough Elementary and Antrim Elementary Schools. She said that if we only close one school at a time it is not very equitable. It is not the right course to "see how it goes".

Janine Lesser said that we knew that people would be against this. It is why previous boards have dropped the discussion. In our deliberations over the budget there is angst to get the resources that we need in the middle and high school coupled with reductions in the State leaving the board no choice at this point. She is reluctant to close one year at a time. The gist of the report is right on. We need to go forward with a warrant article but not sure going one at a time is best. A year of planning is embedded in the motion. She said that she is in favor of the motion.

Dick Dunning asked the minute-taker to reread the motion which reflected what Dan Harper read vs. the motion that was printed and distributed.

Dan Harper was asked to read his motion around Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Katherine said that all of the language has an impact.

Dan Harper said that his intent was to look at the actual savings, the bus routes, and he did not mean to "see how it goes". He would want to see what is faced with before doing four schools and not more than one.

Jim Fredrickson commented that he has thought about this for a long time. He said that he has heard all of the concerns and understands and he is aware of the appetite for equity and modernization. The only way that we can do this is for something to give.

He preferred a warrant article to give the Board the full authority to close schools. What will the voters most likely approve? He is not in favor of stretching it out. He is in favor of something less and cannot support a five-year plan.

Tom Burgess said that clarity on the motion is what he needs.

Greg Kriebel said that it is not perfect. A lot of work went into this. The goal is really not about savings and should be about what is best for our students. Equal opportunities throughout the district, staff not traveling, etc. Fully staffed schools. If students are more consolidated there is less chance for ostracization. When you have multiple classrooms that risk is diminished significantly. You get to have a change every year. Students need to learn empathy. There is more opportunity for classrooms and education if we go with this plan.

"What if this fails?" is a legitimate concern. Failure is not doing something. Dr. Kriebel agreed with the sentiment of ripping off the band aid rather than going a slow approach. He recommended going with the recommendation in the report.

Tom Burgess said that going slow will not help. He said that if he were opposed to this and he was in another school that was chosen to close first, he would still be opposed.

Janine Lesser asked how this affects the Articles of Agreement.

Dick Dunning said that whatever comes out of this will go into a Warrant Article.

Janine Lesser said that she feels that everything needs to go at the same time and not phased. The first year was always going to be a planning year.

Mike Hoyt said that in his experience, an Ad Hoc Committee was put together to make sure that children's education will improve by consolidation. A whole year was spent doing visits and meetings to make sure that happened the best way possible.

Dick Dunning said that the motion has caused some confusion. He asked for clarification on wording.

Dick said that the motion could be withdrawn and the second as well for further consideration. Moved and seconded.

Katherine Heck offered an amendment as follows:

Amended Motion on Phased Implementation Plan for Consolidation/Reconfiguration Recommendation. We, the ConVal School Board, recommend that the ConVal School District vote to support the recommendation of Prismatic Services report to close Temple Elementary School, Francestown Elementary School, Dublin Elementary School and Bennington Elementary School with the following modifications:

Implementation of this recommendation would be changed to provide for a phased multi-year approach as follows:

Phase 1. School Year 2024-2025: Allow for the analysis and determined approach to the closing of the identified schools. Establish a Task Force to determine all requirements for making the implementation as successful and seamless as possible, provide for contingencies and community engagement.

Phase 2. School Year 2025-2026: Implement the closing of the above determined elementary schools with criteria for success identified. Monitor the success of the closing of the elementary schools according to the criteria requirements determined by the Task Force and approved by the school board.

**Phase 3. School Year 2026-2027" Continue to monitor and adjust the plan as required.
Board Recommends 11/2.**

Tom Burgess said that phase 3 would be a monitoring year to allow flexibility.

Greg Kriebel seconded.

Katherine Heck outlined the changes to the original motion.

Tom Burgess confirmed what he believed the amendment to read.

Katherine shared the experiences of her children having attended three separate elementary schools and they all got what they needed.

She said that the Budget & Property Committee just met and we are looking to redo our CTE Center with a bond estimate of \$27M in tax dollars with \$15M from the state.

Kimberly Saunders said that the dollars from CTE require work to be completed by a certain date.

Katherine Heck said that this is for the future of our community; they are training for jobs. The public may not know what is on the board's plate and what is coming. She favored a motion similar to what she proposed.

Dick asked the Board if the amendment was clear:

Katherine Heck reread the amendment back:

Phase 1. School Year 2024-2025: Allow for the analysis and determined approach to the closing of the identified schools. Establish a Task Force to determine all requirements for making the implementation as successful and seamless as possible, provide for contingencies and community engagement.

Phase 2. School Year 2025-2026: Implement the closing of the above determined elementary schools with criteria for success identified. Monitor the success of the closing of the elementary schools according to the criteria requirements determined by the Task Force and approved by the school board.

Phase 3. School Year 2026-2027" Continue to monitor and adjust the plan as required.

William Bryk said that he still believes having listened carefully to the remarks of his colleagues that this idea is not well founded and that if this procedure was a question of selling the idea of closing schools, he has not seen so much elitism throughout this procedure. He said that he believes that when/if we choose to do this we will gut four small towns. He said that he will not be a party to that.

Jim Fredrickson said that it is our responsibility to give all of the voters this opportunity to make the decision.

Tom Kirilin said that we should recall that there are plenty of parents who are concerned about Peterborough Elementary School absorbing that many kids. Not everybody in Peterborough is in favor of this.

Dick Dunning said that PES would be two-thirds full if schools were called.

There is an amendment to the original motion.

Dick Dunning said that he believes that we need to hear from all of the taxpayers to provide guidance on whether this is the right thing or wrong thing. We need to take a stand and have the public tell the board what they want to do.

He commended the public for their approach on this subject and how respectful and polite they are. It is critical that people can speak their opinion and walk away feeling safe.

In favor of the amended motion: Alan Edelkind, Tom Burgess, Jim Fredrickson, Janine Lesser, Mike Hoyt, Dan Harper, Greg Kriebel, Liz Swan, Erin Pils-Martin, Katherine Heck, Dick Dunning

Opposed: William Bryk, Tom Kirilin

Motion passed.

Next is the discussion on wording of the Warrant Article.

Alan Edelkind said that section five of the current Articles of Agreement would require modification. He proposed the Article to read, beginning with the sentence "Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, and Peterborough. The School Board will be responsible for and have the authority to determine if any (or all) of these elementary schools (Temple, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown) shall remain open or are to be closed. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board.

Alan said that four elementary schools would be closed.

Janine Lesser asked what the benefit is to go in specific detail rather than changing the word "shall" to "may".

Alan Edelkind said that if eight schools were involved it would impact the vote. There are four.

Janine Lesser asked about the rest of the article. She asked why the language was necessary. Shouldn't the changes be as minimal as possible and change the word from "Shall" to "may". Alan said that it is to let the other towns know that they would not be closed.

Copies of the proposed warrant article were requested. Copies were made.

Tom Kirlin asked what Article 5 says originally. Copies were provided.

Dick Dunning said that it has always been complex because the school board could not make changes. A two-thirds vote would allow the school board to make decisions. The board can make decisions on the best knowledge available. The new version gives authority to the school board to make decisions.

Tom Kirlin said that if the report recommends closing them all, we should close them all. This amendment allows one school or more to remain open or closed. What is the point of the report?

Katherine amended that we strike a sentence out to be sure that the intent is clear. She recommended that the statement "The School Board will be responsible for and have the authority to determine if any (or all) of these elementary schools (Temple, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown) shall remain open or are to be closed. The remainder that begins with "As school populations....shall remain. Greg Kriebel seconded the amendment to the motion.

Katherine read the proposed amendment as follows:

The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, and Peterborough. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board.

Tom Burgess said that we have to rewrite the version. He suggested a change to the language about middle schools.

Dick said that it is not a change from the original article.

Tom Burgess said that a casual voter might not recognize that there is not a change proposed.

William Bryk suggested that the careful use of the words "shall" and "may" are sound as written. He said that he does not agree with this motion or purpose. It will achieve what the author wants to achieve.

Tom Burgess said that he never questioned the voters' intelligence but more how it reads and how it might be interpreted.

Dick Dunning suggested maintaining the language.

The motion is an amendment to the original motion.

In favor: Alan Edelkind, Tom Burgess, Jim Fredrickson, Janine Lesser, Mike Hoyt, Dan Harper, Greg Kriebel, Liz Swan, Erin Pils-Martin, Katherine Heck, Dick Dunning

Opposed: William Bryk and Tom Kirlin.

Motion passed.

Katherine Heck said that we are bringing forward the Articles of Agreement. Are we also bringing the phased approach? Is it part of the Warrant Article or just for the minutes.

Dick said that we can ask legal how to put the language in if that is the intent. He said that he feels that it is the intent.

Katherine asked if it would be two separate warrant articles or one item.

Kimberly Saunders said that phasing would be a simple majority but a change to the Articles requires two-thirds vote. She shared what the approach might be.

Jim Fredrickson asked what the ramifications are if one passes and the second does not.

Kimberly Saunders said that legal advice would be consulted.

Dick Dunning said that you need to have it as a warrant article so that people will understand.

9. New Business

a. Expense and Encumbrances (Board Vote Required) – Brian Cisneros

Brian Cisneros referenced both October and November Expenditure Reports.

Jim Fredrickson moved to approve the expense and encumbrances and all encumbrances therein. William Bryk seconded.

Brian Cisneros referenced an updated payment schedule.

Katherine Heck said that she has specific questions and asked how it will be adjusted.

Brian said that it will be adjusted if anything comes in accordingly.

Unanimous.

10. Public Comment

Gary Gorski, Peterborough, said that it strikes him that the board is asking for votes to close schools and then take a year to figure out how to do it. He shared his view on how it would work with classroom size counts. He shared additional concerns.

Steve Chamberlain, Frankestown, shared that he has a background in data analytics. He said that 30 years is the amount of time he was supported by a single mother. He said that the fact that the board thinks that families do not live in single bedroom apartments makes this fundamentally flawed.

Michelle Cilley Boise, Temple, reported moving to Temple six years ago. The realtor reported the wonderful school system. They moved from Peterborough. She did not think that there was a chance that this could happen. She said that parents have shared concern.

She shared information from a report about student learning in small schools.

She said that she is not confident that her children will not be impacted by consolidation. She said that the best answer is to support what is best for children's futures.

Doug Sutherland, Hancock, said that his daughter went to HES and loved it. Her best friend went to PES, they did a great job. They are looking forward to being in high school together. He thanked the board and the public for having the chat and the debate. It is now time for the public to vote on this topic. It is our turn to convince others that this is right or not right for our district.

Christy Greene, Dublin, shared that she is deeply saddened by the decision that was made in this room tonight. There is never a perfect time and it is sad that this decision was made in the way that it was. She said that she hopes that the assumptions in population that were made are accurate. She is sad to force this vote in March.

John Wood, Dublin, said that this is being rushed and this is ludicrous. He said that teachers have not had a voice in this. He said that he knows that teachers not in this district talk about how much more can be done in a class of 15 rather than 20. He will be voting against this and will make sure that every citizen does too.

Katherine Heck asked to entertain a motion that we convene a communication committee to start planning meetings between now and March on this topic. It is critically important.

Dick Dunning confirmed.

11. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A: 3, II

- a. Negotiations**
- b. Personnel**
- c. Student**
- d. Legal**

Dan Harper moved to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II at 10:05 p.m. Unanimous on a roll call vote.

Erin Pils-Martin motioned to exit Non-Public Session at 10:22 p.m. William Bryk seconded. Unanimous. Motion to seal the minutes of Non-Public Session for a period of five years. Second. Unanimous.

12. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 10:23 p.m. Seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok