

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

**CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD**

**School Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 5, 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 (elect.)

Lucy Jackson, Student Rep.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Supt.  
Dr. Ann Forrest, Asst. Supt.  
Brian Cisneros, B.A.  
Tim Conway, SMS  
Ben Moenter, Special Ed.  
Deb Riley, CVHS  
Nicole Pease, DCS  
Larry Pimental, PES  
Rick Simoneau, CVHS  
Heather McKillop, CVHS  
Shawne Hilliard, GES

**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**

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

**3. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)**

Brian Cisneros certified that manifests listed totaling \$1,983,416.76 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 moved to approve the Manifests as read. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

**4. Public Comment**

Dick Dunning opened the public comment period. Those present have two minutes to speak.

Penelope Bielagus, Peterborough, shared that both kids have attended schools since Kindergarten. She said that her children struggle due to the start time of school. She shared observations of her children struggling. Evidence for a later start time have not resulted in a change for the ConVal School District. She advocated for students and staff. High school and Middle school start times are earlier than the 8:30 recommended start time by the Academy of Pediatrics. Staff do not live in district and have a commute. It is possible that a later start time could improve teacher retention. She said that we should look to the research done by others. Ms. Bielagus said that she believes that a later start time can be a reality.

Denise Zimmer, Peterborough, spoke about a late start time being of benefit to students. She said that she understands that this has been under discussion in the past. Our community now supports a later start time. Research shows a later start time would benefit students. Students are not being lazy or stubborn, they are going through a biological shift. Her 5th grader wakes up at 4:30 to be ready for school. She shared her concerns as well as information from a study conducted in Maine.

Jesse Marcum, Dublin, said that he feels helpless despite his concerns about discussion on consolidation. He said that despite being informed, not once did someone ask him what he wants. He shared the meeting set up in towns.

He wants elementary schools to remain open. Students have the opportunity to attend an intimate school, stand out and be recognized. Small schools are a promise to students. Small schools are a gift to the next generation. Whatever the board takes for action in the next several weeks, please start listening to the community.

Kari Higley, Dublin, shared her anger with regard to recommendations of school closure in the newspaper. She said that she is outraged at the expense to look at this issue. Inside buildings, students are taught to love learning and develop friendships between students and adults. Teachers see everything. They know when students are struggling. She is outraged at the clearly biased data. The data has been skewed by preschool data. The schools that are slated for closing do not have preschools which tells her that this has been in the works for some time.

Kimberly Marcum, Dublin, shared that she is outraged by the lack of evidence provided in the Prismatic Report. Sources were not cited. From what year were the test score averages taken? Sources are not cited and information is withheld. All children thrive in small learning environments. Finally, she said that she is outraged at the importance of the social capital that is being ignored. It is the networks of relationships to function efficiently. Closing these small schools will break the web, the social capital network, students and teachers do not deserve this.

Morgan Jadis, Dublin parent, and Ross Jadis, student shared concern about school closure. Jadis read a few words about his concern.

Laura Mafera, Frankestown, said that when reading the Request for Proposal, actions speak otherwise than the community involvement stated as important. Meetings were not a back and forth engagement and not a dialogue. The online forum was confusing. On December 11th, the Community Forum agenda shares a 35-minute period for input by the community.

May Clark, Dublin, shared questions as a result of the recommendation by Prismatic. She said that she has not had any exposure to any questions. She shared her hope that these questions would be answered. \$2.5M sounds like a lot; she wondered what is included in the \$2.5M projected annual savings. Teachers and staff are the biggest portion; how many positions? What else is included? Have additional costs been added in e.g. receiving schools may need some work to receive children, transportation costs, longer busing time might be likely? May asked for a ballpark figure on savings on individual tax bills.

## **5. Reports**

### **a. Student Representative – Lucy Jackson**

Lucy Jackson said that the craft fair raised over \$4K for the senior trip to Montreal and the Prom. A movie night is coming on December 21st. The first A.L.I.C.E. drill was recently held, which is a lockdown. It went well. Winter sports are starting.

### **b. Selectmen's Advisory Committee (SAC)- Alan Edelkind**

Alan Edelkind reported that discussion took place about consolidation and reconfiguration. SAC was updated on activities to date and those to come. A community forum will take place on December 11th. The report is out on the website. The board will meet and vote on whether to accept the recommendation and conclusion or not. A warrant article discussion would follow if accepted. A special board meeting will take place on December 13th. The proposed budget was also discussed. The renovation of the high school and CTE was discussed. The December meeting schedule was also discussed. They will meet next on December 14th.

## **6. Consent Agenda**

### **a. Acceptance of School Board Meeting Minutes**

- 1) November 7, 2023
- 2) November 14, 2023

### **b. Personnel**

- 1) Resignation – Zoe Paige
- 2) 2023-2024 Co-Curricular Notifications

The Consent Agenda was accepted.

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

Kimberly Saunders asked for direction on what to do with questions that have or will be directed to her about consolidation/reconfiguration. The response was to send them to Alan Edelkind.

### **a. Blended Learning Leadership Presentation**

A presentation titled "Purposeful Use of Technology at ConVal" was shared by Helfried Zrzavy, Rachael Bowman, Shawne Hilliard, Sarah Hale, Emily LaCroix, and Riley Belliveau

Helfried Zrzavy shared that this is related to the Strategic Plan and outlined what would be shared tonight.

Shawne Hilliard shared survey results from January 2022 about the integration of technology in student learning. Making this a priority to address purposeful use of technology is a focus.

Rachael Bowman spoke about the enduring vision of embracing technology as a vehicle accessible to all, enabling each learner to become a contributing member. A deeper commitment to equitable resources across the district was a focus. Purposeful use of technology was defined.

Emily LaCroix shared the practical implementation of the use of digital resources. In elementary school, students explore resources that engage them using technology. In middle school, ways that students access to technology use was shared.

Helfried Zrzavy shared how online resources are used at the high school level.

Sarah Hale shared current work underway which included looking at four approaches to technology use; SAMR, Triple E, TPACK, and TIM.

Ann Forrest shared next steps.

Dick Dunning asked if the four tools are being piloted; how will the tool be determined?

Sarah Hale said that it was clear that different tiers of education may favor one tool over another. They don't contradict each other. Many viewpoints are being brought together.

### **b. High School Schedule Update**

Heather McKillop, Deb Riley, Carol Young, and Amanda Haley make up a team looking at the daytime schedule and not the start and end times of the day.

The work of this committee is focused on looking at the high school day schedule.

Deb Riley, Special Education Administrator at ConVal High School, said that they have recognized the importance of reflective practice. In the fall of 2021, the ConVal High School Leadership Team scheduling looked at the four by four schedule. What schedule would best meet the needs of students was asked. Does the current schedule provide for optimal learning for all students? The team presented in 2022 to the Education Committee. Pros and cons were researched and bell schedules were researched. Surveys were sent to students, staff, and parents. Data has been tabulated. A parent group was created and met with.

Schools to interview were finalized. Interview questions were developed and edited. Interviews are currently scheduling for this month and January.

Benefits of the current four by four schedule include classes such as science, music and CTE meet for 80+ minutes; students can earn up to 32 credits in 4 years.

Drawbacks include students potentially experiencing learning gaps, the retention of students was another.

School contacts and roles within those schools slated for interview were shared.

A four by four schedule means that students take four courses each day for a semester and then switch the following semester. Some courses do run the entire year e.g. advance placement courses.

Graduation requirements for ConVal is a minimum of 26 credits with the potential for a student to earn up to 32 credits.

Next steps include interviews in coming weeks, evaluating the data received from interviews and report back to the ConVal Leadership Team, determine which schools to visit and talk in depth with stakeholders, share the findings and solicit feedback, analyze impact on current schedule, and develop a recommendation by Spring 2025.

Katherine Heck asked what the schedules of participating CTE's are and are they part of the dialogue in this discussion.

Deb Riley said that all of the schools interviewing sends students but do not receive. Current schools have a slightly different schedule. Conant is the primary sender.

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

The Monthly Events Calendar was updated to reflect the December 7<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting rescheduled to December 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **d. School Board Requests**

Kimberly Saunders reported that there are no outstanding School Board Requests.

## **8. Old Business**

### **a. FY'25 Proposed Budget**

Brian Cisneros reported that \$400K moved into grants from the proposed budget. E-Rate qualified items have been moved to E-Rate funding and out of budget. Guidance from the board is needed about expenses from this

budget and out of Capital Reserve funds. It is over \$300K that can be pushed over to trusts. The hope is to utilize \$300K from the Health Maintenance Trust Fund due to increases in cost. The Operating Budget is \$55M Revenues are \$3M.

Jim Fredrickson commented that a financial article will be released soon and will be on the topic of tax bills. As decisions are made on the use of trust funds, the assessment is updated. District Assessment right now is going to go up 9% which is driven by not knowing how much will be returned next year. Kimberly Saunders said that guidance is needed about trust funds, grant pieces etc. At the next board meeting on December 19th, information is needed for the January 9th Public Hearing. Jim Fredrickson said that the budget book had a base of \$55+M. Jim cited decisions around specific positions. Katherine Heck said that she is unsure that everyone has access to the documents he just sent out. Jim Fredrickson said that the budget books had four items in it, he sent out a tracking sheet on them.

The ESP Clinical Coordinator -

Kimberly Saunders said that we did not come prepared to discuss this. Four to six weeks have passed so the assumption was made that they would not be added.

Jim asked the board if they were prepared.

Katherine Heck said that she believes that the board should work with information in front of them tonight, with suggestions, before we add to the budget. She said that she preferred to work with information in front of everyone. Dick Dunning suggested leaving the four items out and work with figures here before considering adding back.

Katherine shared that the trust fund information was shared tonight. She would like board to consider moving some into building, equipment, special education, and technology in the amount of \$333,571.90.

\$194,413.00 should be considered for moving into grants. \$194K should be minus the E-Rate of \$114K.

**Katherine Heck motioned to discuss this further.**

Kimberly Saunders said that if a hearing to purchase these things now is decided, that amount will come out of the budget.

Dick Dunning said that the Building Trust, in the amount of \$129,750.90 would come out of trusts now and out of next year's budget. Confirmed.

Katherine Heck said that these are planned expenses.

Jim Fredrickson said that if we decide to use trust funds, and use it this year, a public hearing would allow the funds to be expended and it would be off the books for next year.

\$129K would be taken out of the proposed budget, have a hearing in this year, and take funds out of next year.

Katherine Heck said that we have a Capital Plan funded through fund balance by the permission of voters. It allows the building up of these accounts. We must wait until year end to see if there are dollars. We are trying to realize the plans in a different time table rather than wait until July 1st. We are not spending funds that are not planned for.

Kimberly Saunders said that this is designed to take the peaks and valleys out of the budget.

**Katherine Heck moved to accept the proposal to move \$333,571.90 from the Building Trust, Equipment Trust, Special Education Trust, and Technology Trust funds to realize our capital plan.**

**Mike Hoyt seconded.**

The budget would be reduced by \$333,572.00 and would have to be done this year. Confirmed.

Balances of trust funds are healthy. Target balances will not be impacted by this decision.

**Unanimous.**

This reduces the Operational Budget from 3.5% to 2.88%.

The E-Rate total is \$80,013.00.

**Katherine Heck moved to maximize grant dollars and accept the proposal for \$80,013.00 for the purpose of using grant dollars as long as they are eligible expenditures.**

**Mike Hoyt seconded.**

**Unanimous.**

Kimberly Saunders said that if \$80,013.00 does not qualify does this go back in the budget. Confirmed.

Katherine Heck moved that the Health Trust Fund account for the purpose of offsetting peaks be considered by using all of those dollars and creating \$375K to \$400K in subsequent years to refund it.

This does not have to be voted tonight.

Jim Fredrickson said that \$300K would be funds moved and not reduce budget. Confirmed.

Katherine Heck said that she wants to use the entire balance of the fund; more than \$300K. There would be a reduction in budget and wash to allow considering items.

Jim Fredrickson suggested not tying dollar amount to replenish with that motion.

Katherine Heck said that she wanted to bring this forward now so that the board would have this thought. Using more than \$300K is the aim. Refund it as the first warrant article would be proposed. We want to pass a teacher's contract and this would allow some flexibility.

Jim Fredrickson said that we should not go with all of it; he suggested \$500K for discussion purposes.

Dick Dunning said that taking it all now helps reduce the proposed budget.

Jim said that if approved, \$500K would be added to estimated revenues and would happen in the next fiscal year.

**Katherine Heck moved that \$500K from the Health Trust be allocated for purpose of offsetting the health insurance increase in the next fiscal year.**

**Mike Hoyt seconded. Unanimous.**

Kimberly Saunders said that the budget number will be brought back at the next meeting. Any other direction that the board would like to bring forward should be done so now.

Four positions are not currently in the budget.

Mike Hoyt said that he would like to hear about them at the next board meeting. Prioritized was asked. Confirmed.

#### **b. Consolidation/Reconfiguration**

Alan Edelkind thanked everyone for the time they have taken to speak during public comment. He urged people not to lose sight that the board will vote on a recommendation. The full vote in March by the community would have to vote  $\frac{2}{3}$ 's in favor to vote any change to the Articles of Agreement. A warrant would need to be out in January.

We started this project back in June of 2022. It is on a quick track, but not too quick. A lot of information has been gathered. You have the final say. The Community Forum, Board vote, and a lot of communication is coming forward. A mailing was received in community's today. The website is a resource for information.

William Bryk asked if it was  $\frac{2}{3}$ 's of entire district or each town. Two-thirds of the entire district was the response.

Dan Harper said that a lot of the board has worked very hard on this project; none harder than Alan Edelkind.

### **9. New Business**

#### **a. Accept Gift/Donation (Board Vote Required)**

- 1) Dublin Consolidated School requests authorization to accept from the Dublin Community Foundation, the gift/donation of \$500.00 for the purpose of purchasing winter equipment.

**William Bryk moved to accept the donation as presented. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

- 2) Dublin Consolidated School requests authorization to accept from the Dublin Community Foundation, the gift/donation of \$525.00 for the purpose of Marty Kelly, a presenter.

**William Bryk moved to accept the donation as presented. Katherine Heck seconded with appreciation. Unanimous.**

- 3) ConVal High School requests authorization to accept from the Harris Center for Conservation Education, the gift/donation of \$1,000.00 for the purpose of offsetting the cost of Belize Tropical Ecology trip for participating students.

**William Bryk moved to accept the donation as presented. Katherine Heck seconded with appreciation. Unanimous.**

- 4) Peterborough Elementary School requests authorization to accept from the Peterborough Elementary School PTO, the gift/donation of \$1,100.00 for the purpose of a science enrichment activity/event provided by the Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation.

**William Bryk moved to accept the donation as presented. Katherine Heck seconded with appreciation. Unanimous.**

### **10. Public Comment**

Doug Sutherland, Hancock, shared an incident of racism experienced by his daughter. He thanked the teachers, administrators, and Superintendent's office for addressing this immediately. He encouraged anyone offended to speak up immediately. If you are not a part of that community, we need you to speak up. He is proud of his daughter for speaking up. It will continue to happen if people sit back because it does not impact them. He thanked Great Brook School for supporting his children. It won't end until all of us stand up.

Denise Zimmer, Peterborough, clarified why she selected the study from Maine. It took eight months to implement. She urged to board to research other success stories. Please don't let this issue get lost. A creative solution can be developed with without burden.

Kimberly Marcum, Dublin, shared the appreciation on how much time Alan Edelkind has put into the study on reconfiguration/consolidation. When she feels protective of her children and town, she does not want that to come across as unappreciative. She has been looking through some of the data. She said that she feels that there are over 400 pages with a lot of information with a short amount of time for people to read it. She understands the 2/3's voter majority; it is a lot of information. Although this has been talked about for years, taking the time to read the report thoroughly during a very busy time of year is a concern. She thanked the board for what they do for the community.

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

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

**Janine Lesser motioned to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II at 8:45 p.m. Seconded. Unanimous on a roll call vote.**

**William Bryk moved to exit Non-Public Session at 9:21 p.m. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

**William Bryk motioned to seal the minutes of Non-Public Session for a period of five years. Katherine Heck seconded. Unanimous.**

**12. Adjourn**

**Jim Fredrickson motioned to adjourn at 9:23 p.m. Erin Pils-Martin seconded. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok