

Oyster River Cooperative School Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Michael Williams, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk, Al Howland, Yusi Turell, Dan Klein

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Olivia Gass

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Jim Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Rebecca Noe, Jay Richard, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith

STAFF PRESENT: Pam Felber

GUEST PRESENT:

ABSENT:

I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Michael Williams

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Denise Day moved to approve the agenda as written, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Darren Keller of Lee stated that Board member Yusi Turell is a big proponent of the DEIJ coordinator position and is employed by the UNH Carsey School of Public Policy, which is involved with NH Listens. He stated his contention is that her outside work is a conflict of interest and her vote for the DEIJ position should be spoiled and stricken.

Loren Selig of Durham thanked the Middle School Design Committee's work, stating she was especially happy to see single stall bathrooms on every level so all students, including those that are transgender and gender fluid, have a safe place to use the bathroom. She was grateful for the work done by the DEIJ committee and the opportunity to participate in the Building Bridges event. She felt it was well run and she appreciated the different perspectives shared. Loren forwarded the Board a Religious Holiday Policy that Portsmouth has in place to prevent meetings from being held on federal holidays and to discourage meetings on religious ones. She said if the 2nd Teacher Workshop Day was on the Lunar New Year students wouldn't have to choose between missing school or missing the holiday.

There were no electronic comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Denise Day moved to approve the January 19, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Denise Day submitted the following revision:

On page 2 under Tom Newkirk's comment insert "teaching of" in front of "history" so it reads, "what could go on in teaching of history."

On Page 5 at the top of the page at the end of the first sentence insert "Denise Day stated that her priority would be the items for the concert hall."

Tom Newkirk submitted the following revision:

On page 6 change "felt" to "asked" so it reads "Tom Newkirk asked if it was too early to have a TW in September."

Michael Williams submitted the following revision:

On page 6 move my comment to above the motion rather than below it.

Motion passed with correction 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Denise Day moved to approve the January 19, 2022 Non-Public Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District

Misty Lowe of Mast Way shared about special events occurring, including a music writing initiative that Pam Felber speak about and a school-wide Great Kindness Challenge led by the 4th grade Leadership Team. She said on February 2nd the school recognized “Global School Play Day” to recognize the importance of unstructured play in learning.

Music teacher Pam Felber thanked the School Board for their work and for keeping them safe in the pandemic. She explained “Kid Pan Alley” a group writing residency that is working virtually with each 4th grade class to write an original song. She said that since the pandemic has prevented them from having performances, she wanted to find a unique music experience that would be safe and memorable. She explained the program not only teaches a lot of writing and music skills, but it also inspires creativity, builds confidence, and fosters community. Pam shared the backgrounds of artists Paul Reisler and Cheryl Toth, owners of “Kid Pan Alley”, who feel children make the best song writers because they are so honest. She read the lyrics of the in-progress songs written by Mrs. Farwell, Mrs. Jarod, and Mr. Henry’s class, and played the final version of “Trapped Behind the Mask,” a song about the pandemic written by Mrs. Stacey’s class. Pam thanked the School Board for supporting the arts for all children and was happy that the 4th grade students and teachers can say they are all songwriters.

David Goldsmith of Moharimet spoke about the school theme “Year of the Artist” stating that in January the school investigated winter art by having sculptures known as “Ice Breakers” carve a snowman and the Moharimet logo. Throughout the day students were able to witness various stages of the ice sculpting, ask questions and learn about ice. David said for February the school is hosting an art museum in which students of all grades, including adults, are invited to showcase an art piece. Each grade has a designated week to display their art and classes will tour the museum weekly. A digital slide show of the art museum will be created at the end of the event and will be available for the entire community to watch. David was excited to share that Moharimet’s annual maple sugaring event will begin before February vacation as the 4th graders, Mr. Davis, and the rest of the crew in Madbury begin tree tapping.

Rebecca Noe of ORHS announced that the virtual 8th grade information night for course selection will be held on February 3rd. Due to expected inclement weather for Friday all sports games have been moved to Thursday night. She received a lot of feedback about the exam schedule and with the help of the Leadership Team they will come out with a schedule for the end of the year, so people know what to expect early on. Rebecca said on February 16th the seniors will be given the opportunity during advisory and flex period to walk through the old ORMS building to see their teachers and have a final experience before it is torn down. In June they will visit the new ORMS for a walk through while middle school students are there. Since the town will be using the high school for elections on March 8th, this day will be a remote day for ORHS students. On March 23rd the PSAT and SAT’s will be held for 10th & 11th graders, for seniors it will be a college visit day or a time to do community service or schoolwork, and for 9th graders activities will be in the building. Rebecca was happy to share that they received a Certificate of Inclusion from Special Olympics for the New Hampshire Unified Champion of Schools program.

Tom wondered if the HS remote day would affect the district number of days for enrollment. Dr. Morse replied that because the majority of the schools would be in session this would have no impact.

B. Board

Denise Day gave a huge thank you to all the panelists that participated in the recent Building Bridges forum put together by the DEIJ committee, including counselors Jason Baker & Rheanna Cote; teachers Jaclyn Jenson, Jon Silverio, Kate Zimar and Val Wilson and students Zoe Selig and Caroline Sterndale. She thanked them for speaking and articulating their experiences.

Brian Cisneros thanked those that attended the final walk through of the new ORMS building. He invited the Board members to attend the opening of ORMS on February 28th at 7:30 to greet the students as they enter. Parking will be on Dennison Rd., Coe Dr., at the solar panels, and by the fields.

Yusi Turell thanked Pam Felber for the incredible music and David Goldsmith for the creative expression with the younger students. She shared how appreciative she was to attend Jon Bromley's Capstone presentations to witness students use their passions toward a problem and their acquired skills to finding a real-world solution. The presentation topics were Women in Sports, Building Zero Waste Purchasing Systems, Supporting Trail Maintenance, and Building a Peer Support System Around Mental Health. Yusi said she learned a lot about vaping and tobacco use from the Vaping Unveiled presentation and thanked the counseling department for putting it on. Yusi responded to Darren Keller's public opinion statements. She stated that there is a strength in having an overlap with the university in general, but also with the education department, sustainability institute and others. She said she talked to Dr. Morse about this and there is no conflict of interest.

V. DISTRICT REPORTS**A. Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum & Instruction Report(s)**COVID METRIC

In Catherine Plourde's absence, Suzanne Filippone spoke about the COVID metrics. She said the metrics are the same from last week since there is a delay in the state's reporting, which includes new cases per 100,000, the percent positive, the transmission rate and the ICU capacity remaining in substantial range. She said currently, the staffing capacity is sufficient, which is a great improvement and due in part to the number of cases declining post February break. Suzanne thanked everyone in the community for their positivity and for following the new procedures. She said Catherine received the rapid tests and they are available for families that need them for home testing, and overall, home testing has helped reduce testing taking place in the nurse's office. Testing cases per day has declined to 1-6 while it was previously 3-4 times that amount.

Denise Day raised a question about contact tracing since it was no longer going to be required by the State and wondered if that would lead to changes in the district. Suzanne said that it is something they'd have to talk about as a governance team.

B. Superintendent's ReportCandidate's Night

Dr. Morse stated that the Candidate's Night will be held at ORMS tentatively on February 15th as a virtual meeting. There is no specific information yet, but details will be forthcoming from the Middle School PTO.

Communication Committee Update

Regarding the Communication Survey, Dr. Morse stated there are five emerging themes and the SAU and Leadership Team will be creating categorizations under these broad categories.

The five themes are:

1. Centralized Hub Information
2. Consistency & Clarity
3. Administration & Board Interaction with the Community

4. Soliciting of Input & Tapping Community Resources
5. Administration & Classroom Interactions with the Community

Denise Day asked when the results of the Community Communication Survey will be available, and Dr. Morse felt they could expect them within a month.

Update on Middle School Move to New Building

Jay Richard said the opening of the new middle school is quite a historic moment for the district. He shared with the listening audience that viewings of the old middle school will be offered on Friday, February 11th from 4-6pm and Saturday, February 12th from 10-12pm. He encouraged everyone to attend, especially former teachers and high school students. Jay said on February 14th and 15th all teachers and students will have orientation time to get acclimated to the new school, however, on February 16-18th only the teachers and staff will be there to set up and middle school students will not be in school. He invited the Board to a luncheon at the new school on February 18th at 11:00. During the February 21-25th Winter Recess Jay encouraged parents to get familiar with student drop off and pick up. He invited the community to viewings at the new middle school on February 24th from 10-12pm and 4-6pm. The first official day of school will be February 28th, with an opening celebration that Board Members are invited to attend at 7:30am. There will be parent viewings of the new school offered by grade level: March 1st Grades 5 & 8 5:00-7:00pm and March 3rd Grades 6 & 7 5:00-7:00pm. Jay said bricks from the old ORMS will be available as mementos, including ones from 1935.

Dr. Morse spoke about the new middle school opening reminding everyone that it is a big move and not everything will be perfect on the first day. He would like teachers to keep a list for 30 days and over time they will figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the building and make changes as necessary. He reminded everyone that although there are some delays in different parts of the school, they are not big enough to impact opening day. These include teaching boards, tables that were broken during shipping, a heat pump, art kilns, refrigerators for the teachers' rooms, incorrect sized side light windows, and hinges for large doors. The last two in the list could have affected occupancy certification but Dr. Morse said the substitutes are safe. He said air quality testing will be taking place in the coming days. Regarding the canopy, he said they housed 12 buses during the last storm, and it greatly reduced the snow removal time down to 2 hours and it was far more efficient plowing out the property. Dr. Morse and the Board were pleased with these results and this unforeseen advantage of the canopy.

Schedule ORHS Graduation for Friday, June 10, 2022.

Rebecca Noe respectfully requested the School Board reserve June 10th for an evening graduation ceremony with a rain date of June 11th in the morning.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to schedule the ORHS Graduation for Friday, June 10, 2022, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

The March 2nd board meeting was slated to take place at the new ORMS, however, due to a chip shortage impacting technological delays, Dr. Morse suggested staying at ORHS until they receive confirmation from Alexander Taylor. The Board agreed with no additional comments.

C. Business Administrator - No report given

D. Student Representative Report

Olivia Gass reported that the *Mouth of the River* publication is slightly delayed and will be coming out in a week or so. She said midterms went decently well and went by quick. She said there were conflicting feelings about the delay in midterms with some students disappointed since they were prepared or confused on the new due dates for projects, while others were feeling happy to have had an opportunity for relearning. Olivia shared that the Senior Class Government will be holding a Krispy Kreme fundraiser beginning March 8th. She felt the new semester has been off to a good start.

A. Finance Committee Report - No report given

B. Other: None

VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

List of policies for Second Read/Adoption: JIC – Student Conduct, JICD – Student Discipline and Due Process. For Deletion (Current JICD) – Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process-Safe School Zone.

Michael Williams made a motion to approve the list of policies for second read/adoption: JIC – Student Conduct, JICD – Student Discipline and Due Process and for Deletion (Current JICD) – Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process-Safe School Zone, 2nd by Denise Day.

Denise made a correction on page 2 stating the word “keep” in parentheses at the end of the paragraph should be struck since it was a side note to the committee and not supposed to be part of the policy.

Yusi Turell asked if anything meaningful had been changed that the Board should be aware of.

Dr. Morse explained that the changes were required by state law, which has made it harder, in a good way, for students to be suspended or expelled.

Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Michael Williams reminded the Board that the purpose of the unanimous consent agenda is to quickly approve things that don’t require discussion and if things will require discussion, they shouldn’t be on the unanimous consent agenda.

VI. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

Update on House Bill 1255 Testimony

Tom Newkirk spoke about his testimony against HB1255 to the NH House Education Committee. In his letter to the state, he said that the bill was unclear on the kind of action it addresses and on what is required. He read a quote from the bill to show that the language was vague and indiscernible. Tom shared a quote from his testimony and said no other school board testified and that it is important that future boards have a presence there. He said it was important to get in the know and figure out which bills we can testify that affect us.

Yusi Turell thanked Tom for speaking up and wondered how to know when to speak up and what to address. Brian Cisneros stated that the information concerning house bills is available online. Dr. Morse explained there are thousands of bills in consideration that affect education and figuring out which ones impact the school district the most is important work, but time consuming so you must be strategic.

Yusi asked if there would be value in having someone navigate this and report back to the Board.

Dr. Morse explained the time factor involved and that the Superintendent Association will notify them on when to activate the state on an issue.

DEIJ Job Description

Suzanne Filippone said the Board asked the DEIJ committee to identify focus areas that are essential functions and responsibilities for the DEIJ Coordinator position. She said they consolidated and removed items from the list to have a greater focus on faculty, staff & students at the building level and less on leadership. She shared the job description handout with the Board.

Brian Cisneros asked if the person had to be a certified teacher, to which Suzanne replied no. Since the description includes a salary of \$95,000-105,000 and they budgeted \$120,000, Brian wondered if the benefits, insurance, and retirement would raise the amount to above what they budgeted. Dr. More stated if so, there are other lines to pull from, such as communications.

Michael Williams and Suzanne discussed the first function and responsibilities in the list to make the item clearer and more deliverable. In response to Michael's comment about inclusion of disability being missing Suzanne said it was not intentional.

Brian asked how the position will be measured year after year to the show the money was well spent. Dr. Morse said the person will be evaluated in the same manner other staff are evaluated, which is that he will base it on the job description, capture the data that supports the items and look at the evidence that exists that it happened.

Michael Williams asked what the next step is in the process. Dr. Morse said after the budget is approved, they will advertise the position, set-up an interview committee, create questions, begin screening and then start the interview process in the spring.

Tom Newkirk wondered since the position is 260 days, if they'd have to pay more and if there was any flexibility to go above it. Dr. Morse replied that to do so he would go back to the Board and identify where the resources are, but he based the amount advertised off of Exeter and Manchester's DEIJ position.

Dr. Morse stated the job description would be posted on the webpage for the public to view and comments can be sent directly to him.

Yusi Turell felt that if they are not sourcing from teachers that would be going after that salary scale there may be more options from other fields and that it could be a competitive salary for someone working in the non-profit sector.

Appointment of District Clerk for the February 8, 2022 Deliberative Session

Michael Williams stated that the School District Clerk has resigned, and Dr. Morse recommended Sue Caswell as the District Clerk for the 2022 Deliberative Session.

Denise Day made a motion to appoint Sue Caswell as District Clerk for the 2022 Deliberative Session on February 8th, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Brian pointed out that it would be for the election cycle. Denise Day made an amendment and Michael clarified the motion.

Denise Day made a motion to appoint Sue Caswell as District Clerk for the 2022 Election Cycle, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Cancellation of Regular Board Meeting on February 16, 2022

Since Dr. Morse will be out of town, the middle school staff will be moving buildings, middle school students will be home and there are no timely action items, Michael Williams suggested cancelling the regular board meeting on February 16th, 2022.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to cancel the regularly scheduled February 16, 2022 School Board Meeting, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

VII.SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

The manifest committee met to review the manifests.

Vendor Manifest #17 total is \$1,875,043.54

Payroll Manifest #15 total was \$1,456,286.74

Denise Day said the Long-Range Committee met on Monday and they will be presenting at the March 2nd meeting. Heather Smith will be presenting the behind-the-scenes math for the projections.

Michael Williams stated that in honor of National Girls & Women in Sports he wanted to congratulate the Girls Distance Medley Relay Team for qualifying for Nationals to take place on March 11th. Congratulations to Haley Kavanagh, Talia Banafato, Erin Carty, and Mackenzie Cook!

Yusi Turell gave a DEI update that it is Black History Month and she said to deepen our understanding a calendar is being developed with activities that will be available soon. She said to contact her in a few days if you don't come across it.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Darren Keller said that Yusi Turell made comments tonight that raised a red flag, including how lucid it would be for someone from a non-profit to enter a DEI position. Regarding Yusi's position at UNH and her connection to NH Listens, Darren said there is no separation between the DEI position being corporate backed and wanted the board to consider striking it. He also stated that the Board hired a lawyer to engage in deliberation with Dover and Barrington regarding tuition costs and there is a lack of transparency around it. He said state officials have been contacted over the matter.

Lauren Selig thanked Tom Newkirk and Al Howland for their service on the Board stating they gave time and dedication to serve all students with no personal agenda. She also thanked Brian Cisneros for his commitment and diligence with the new middle school building.

IX. CLOSING ACTIONS

- A. Future Meeting Dates:**
- February 8, 2022 Deliberative Session – 7:00 PM ORHS Auditorium
 - February 8, 2022 Additional Meeting following Deliberative (if needed)
 - February 16, 2022 Manifest Meeting – SAU - 3:30 PM
 - March 2, 2022 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library 7:00 PM

X. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

- Superintendent Evaluation

Michael Williams moved to enter into Non-Public Session at 8:30 PM under RSA 91-A3 II (c), for the Superintendents Evaluation, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed by roll call vote 7-0.

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I (a) {If Needed}

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Brian Cisneros moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm, 2nd Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper