REVISED 03 04 21
Communication Workshop Remote Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 @ 6:00 PM
Attendees: Michael Williams, Denise Day, Dan Klein, Al Howland, Yusi Turell, Tom Newkirk (6:15PM), James Morse, Todd Allen, Josh Olstad. Absent: Brian Cisneros
Visitors: 0

Michael Williams called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and read the following preamble.

As Vice-Chair of the Oyster River Cooperative School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Microsoft Teams for this electronic meeting.1 All members of the School Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-603-766-5646 and ID Code 461362#, or by clicking on the following website address: http://www.orcsd.org/stream

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Microsoft Team or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the ORCSD Board Agenda for 02/10/21.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-280-4202 or email at: orcsd-video@orcsd.org.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Michael Williams then asked for a roll call vote.

Dr. Morse clarified that as this is a workshop meeting, and there will be no motions made or votes taken.

Michael Williams began the meeting by referring to the posted agenda for this meeting and briefly outlined the different topics that will be reviewed this evening so that the Board can gain consensus, determine the criteria for the proposed position prior to July 1st, and other changes that are more immediate. Basically, where we are now, what we are trying to get through and highlight the prominent issues. Michael referred to the list of questions that were included in the back up. He began with the first item on the agenda and asked the Board members to share their thoughts on issues that are prominent in their minds.

Denise Day shared that she felt there were 3 different categories or areas that the Board needs to look at. General communications to the community, communications to parents, and communications within the Board and within the schools. She went on to state that as she does not have a student in the schools, she relies on social media postings, so how do we make sure everyone finds out the school information. How do we get information to make the decisions that we make?

Yusi Turell stated we are trying to categorize. Communication strategies are sometimes not shared. The need of shaping of messaging, director level team decisions need to improve. A more tactical approach is needed. We need to update the website and the strategic plan to get messages across.

Al Howland shared an example of the survey information that was is the past Board packet. The information was vague and didn't tell you anything. What specific areas are having issues? There is so much information, but you can't find it. We have schoology as a parent resource, but it is not being utilized. We also need to simplify the website.

Michael Williams state that the Technology Integrators have put together a power point for the next School Board meeting, so he asked that we hold off on this topic until then.

Yusi Turell asked what we learned from the feedback. What did we learn? How are we understanding the information, what are the communication strategies and the next steps?

Tom Newkirk joined the meeting at this time and Michael outlined what the Board was talking about.

Dan Klein stated that we need an inward – outward look at this. Inward would be someone with expertise with what's in place. Outward is to push the information out. Asking parents if they are finding the information relatively quickly. He gave COVID information as an example. We need to prioritize the information and place it strategically.

Michael Williams acknowledged the community desiring a lot of information and used Covid as an example. There is an abundance of information provided on the website. He went on to state that as a parent in the district, he went back and checked how many school messengers he received in the past couple of weeks was 49. These messages were all links, but he questioned how they can be organized to be easily accessible.

Tom Newkirk spoke about the website in terms of accessibility and the hiring of the proposed consultant. He suggested that maybe using a video format to inform the community is a better option than a printed version of the same information.

Al Howland stated that the current website upkeep is thrust on individuals with no specific training and being asked to do a lot more. What would facilitate a better experience for the parent?

Michael Williams asked what does success look like?

Yusi Turell stated that general branding is what we want to share and listed numerous areas of concern.

Denise Day stated that there are tabs on the website that have not been updated in years. The PTO pages on the school pages is one area. We need to clean up not only the District, but individual school tabs.

Dan Klein stated that there is an assumption that people know where to go, and that this information will be needed by individuals that do not know where to go.

Yusi Turell stated that we need consistency across the District.

Al Howland stated that we need to identify the problem. React to minimize the disruption when something is a crisis.

Tom Newkirk stated that we want to highlight teacher's strength.

Michael Williams asked the Board if there was an immediate need, what would they be.

Yusi Turell stated more stakeholder voices. Writing and editing support. Present stages in communications.

Dan Klein stated that we need to address the problem. Who is right for the position, the analysis piece is incomplete? Need parent input. Simplify the strategies to put a lesser burden on administration.

Al Howland stated that parents need a bootcamp. We need a platform that parents can use.

Michael Williams stated that we have leaned heavily on the technology integrators and asked what resources have the technology integrators had?

Dr. Morse stated that when they opened that parent portal it was most successful at the middle school and least successful at the elementary level. Most parents access through their child's account. IT has provided some training to parents. He gave an example for emails. One issue is who is delivering the message and at what level. The information changes dramatically from teachers to principals. It is not about producing the information, but how accessible this information is.

Denise Day stated that she acquires her information through social media.

Todd Allen stated that the IT role in professional development is the most important line for parents. We adopted the Schoology with a multi-year plan, and then the pandemic hit. Schoology is a tremendous tool and can be personalized.

Todd Allen left the meeting at this point.

Michael Williams asked about the functions of Schoology and if IT is aware of them.

Josh Olstad stated that with the initial roll out of Schoology, the District got support. He stated that there is a lot of trial and error, let's see what works. He went on to say that Schoology was lite on training, but he has been in contact with other area school Districts that are using Schoology such as Moultonboro and Interlakes Regional. Hanover is another resource we tap.

Michael Williams stated that social media was mentioned. How do we know we are successful?

Denise Day stated that she turns to social media for information, but that she has heard comments from the community such as, "Where did you see that?" She asked how do we make sure that information is readily available.

Yusi Turell stated that social media is getting the information out, but that social media influences people.

Michael Williams asked how immediate a challenge is the website.

Dr. Morse asked that we receive some feedback from Josh on this question first.

Josh Olstad stated that he did not like the website, it is a pain and challenging to use. He is looking for an alternate as the contract expires on July 1st. HE stated that he is talking to a lot of other districts and asking who they are talking too. He plans to start doing some demo's and see what fits into the budget.

Al Howland stated that it takes time to do fixes. He stated that he has gone to other sites to review. We need to scale it down. What is the critical information that we are trying to portray and then simplify.

Josh Olstad stated that a challenge, more before the pandemic, but starting up again is that they are putting in accessibility scanners that allow lawsuits to be brought before districts for not following accessibility protocols. He knows of a few NH districts that have been sued for this.

Dan Klein asked about the parent perspective regarding accessibility. What are we looking for and ways we can assist them in their search?

Josh Olstad stated that he focuses more on the back end for supporting people like Jim and Todd for assisting with posting to the website.

Tom Newkirk asked Josh if he had a favorite that he was thinking or researching as an alternate website.

Josh Olstad stated that he cannot think of any, but he will start looking around.

Denise Day asked if there were any Josh didn't like and gave an example of a site that she tried to access for kindergarten information and that it was extremely difficult.

Al Howland stated that we need to avoid trying to add one more thing within the current staffing, how can we be more efficient.

Michael Williams stated that in the next weeks we will need some level of support for laying the groundwork. For the short term for July 1st and the proposed position.

Dr. Morse stated that the immediate need would be getting a handle on who we are trying to reach and how to go about that. He suggested a superintendent communication committee consisting of two Board members and reaching out to parental community with expertise in the communication field. Then have the committee reach out and ask how structure can be more efficient in sending out this information, and the best way to deliver messages we need to.

Yusi Turell suggested a make up of this committee and the tasks that could be accomplished.

Dr. Morse recommends a broader conversation and also have a charge.

Tom Newkirk suggested that for the next Board meeting that Dr. Morse draft a charge with a long-term goal for review.

Michael Williams stated that we covered most of the agenda but didn't go over the list of questions. These can be sent to the Superintendent's Communication Committee. Michael thanked everyone for their time.

Dr. Morse thanked the Board for their guidance tonight.

No additional questions or comments. Meeting ended at 7:24 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy L. DiFruscio