

REVISED 03/06/20

Oyster River Cooperative School District

Regular Meeting

February 19, 2020

ORHS - Library

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD: Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Al Howland, Denise Day, Michael Williams, Kenny Rotner

Student Representative: Absent

ADMINISTRATORS: James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith, Josh Olstad, Andy Lathrop

STAFF PRESENT:

There were 3 members of the public present.

I. CALL TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Tom Newkirk

6:30-7:00 Manifest Review

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Tom Newkirk asked if he could add an item to the agenda, with the Board's authorization and input, a letter that he wrote to the editor pertaining to the bond's effect on taxes in the future.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Darren Keller of Lee stated that he had some comments and questions and was looking for clarification of a few items. He stated that there is State and Federal money available for building aid and asked what it was. He also questioned where the 900 square foot classroom size recommendation came from. He stated that there is a lot of division in the community over the 7 cents that has been projected for taxes and that by the fifth year it will be over \$2.00. Felt that this was very misleading for the voters and would like clarification on this.

Bill Hall of Durham – stated that the first middle school was 1800's factory construction. Dover High School was built in 1967 and was recently knocked down and replaced. It was 67 years old. The current middle school is older than that and we continue to keep it going. He said, you can't take it down fast enough. The proposed middle school is bigger but will cost less. We have a good team working on it. Dr. Morse has three jobs: running the school district, designing a proposed school, and selling it.

Dean Rubine of Lee wanted to let the Board know that the Math Counts students are going to the State finals.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve 2/5/20 regular meeting minutes:

Revisions:

Page 2 sixth paragraph after the first sentence, Tom asked that we add “The Rochester Board was chosen as the Board of the Year, and Matt made an impressive presentation on the Board’s work. Tom applauded him for his Board work which parallels the focus on civic involvement in his classes.”

Page 5 first paragraph 2nd line Denise asked to capitalize Power School.

Page 5 second paragraph first line Kenny asked to replace “amenity” with “anonymity”

Page 6 first paragraph second line Michael asked to replace “chair” with “seats”

Denise Day moved to approve the 2/5/20 meeting minutes as amended, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

**Motion to approve 2/5/20 Non-public meeting minutes:
Revisions:**

Denise Day moved to approve the 2/5/20 non-public meeting minutes as written, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:

A. District:

David Goldsmith and Misty Lowe update the Board on the Kindergarten Registration numbers for both the Moharimet and Mast Way Schools. As of today, the Registration numbers for Moharimet is at 44. Last year at this time it was 46 and school opened at 57. As of today, the registration numbers for Mast Way is at 54. Last year at this time it was 58 and school opened at 64. The entire process was very successful, and parents went away with questions answered and very positive comments.

Andy Lathrop updated the Board on the current standings of our athletic teams. Boys swim team won the Division 2 Championship and the girls came in third, and the Boys indoor track won the Division 2 Championship and the girls were runner ups. He congratulated all for their hard work.

B. Board:

Kenny Rother asked Jim if he would be answering the questions posed by Mr. Keller during public comments. Jim stated that he would be under his Superintendent Report.

Denise Day stated that the Robotics team is doing very well with a high level of success.

Al Howland thanked the District for their support during the primary. They had 5600 voters with 1400 same day registrations. He stated that this was very well coordinated, and they could not have done it without the District help.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS:

A. Assistant Superintendent Reports:

Todd informed the Board that he met with the Durham Energy Committee with Ron Lamarre to answer their questions pertaining to the proposed middle school. It was time well spent. He thanked the committee for having them and would be more than happy to meet with other committees in the same fashion.

Todd wanted to address Mr. Keller's question about the 900 square feet requirement. He stated that it was recommended by Stephen Blatt in his 2015 report and also this information can be found under the NH Minimum Standards 321.1.

Reach Summer Program Update:

Todd informed the Board that a copy of the electronic flyer is in their folders. The program will be run the same as last year with Oyster River running the morning program and Durham Parks and Rec running the afternoon program. Durham Parks and Rec also offer a full day field trip on Friday's. A meeting was convened to see if the MS is still the best location for the program, and even with construction he is confident that this is possible and still the best site.

The flyer is very user friendly and the course offerings are done by OR staff. We are finalizing the last details and the specifics will be completed in March.

Todd added a quick update on World Language pertaining to transitioning from middle school to high school. He stated that 2 assessments were completed with 8th grades and level 2 kids, one for reading/writing and one for speaking. He also stated that the World Language teachers have been in contact and are working together. It was noted that middle school students are better prepared as entering freshman than ever. Todd will continue to update the Board moving forward.

Todd answered some clarifying questions from the Board.

B. Superintendent's Report:

Jim commended Todd on all of the work that he has done with the Reach Program. This has been an incredible success. He also explained that this program is self-sufficient due to parents paying registration fees. Although the program is a non-profit, the program makes a little money to provide scholarships to needy families. He also thanked Rachel from Durham Parks and Rec for her contributions that makes Reach such a successful program.

Jim expressed that the Month of March has many major goals coming to a close. The UNH Survey will be finalized and sent out to the community. The Mast Way Principal

Search is well underway with 5 finalists chosen and scheduled for interviews on March 2nd & 3rd. We will schedule school visits for March 5th & 6th with a parent night on March 9th. We will be bringing the chosen candidate for nomination to the March 18th Board meeting.

Jim informed the Board that Brian Zottoli will be teaching in Jeju, South Korea for the next two years. He will be returning to Oyster River in August of 2022.

Jim reported out on his proposed new middle school outreach that he has done and informed them of what is still to be completed. He told the Board that the current middle school tours will happen the week of March 2 – 6 and March 9. This information was shared with the towns and will be listed in the school newsletters sent home to parents.

Jim took this time to address the questions from Mr. Keller.

The Superintendent spoke highly of the Lee Select Board, especially Mr. Scott Bugbee, the select board member who has participated in the analysis of the need for the proposed school. Jim stated that Scott is a friend of the district and someone he highly regards. Mr. Keller stated that Mr. Bugbee calculated the tax impact for year 5 was \$2.02/thousand. The Superintendent stated that he was there at that meeting and said he did not know how Mr. Bugbee came up with that number, but it's possible he did not have the district's offsets. As an example, in the 3rd year of the MS bond, the high school bond ends, freeing \$750,000 to go toward the middle school bond. This effectively brings the impact of the middle school to zero impact in year 4 and 5. The Superintendent went on, "we know the impact in the first year and it is negligible for Lee at 7 cents/thousand and modest for Durham and Madbury. This was achieved by the Board by reducing the operating budget by over \$700,000, resulting in a .2% increase for 2020-21.

The second year of the bond has the biggest hurdle with approximately \$1.1 million cost. The Board has a number of options to reduce the tax impact in 2021-22. The plan to reduce the tax impact includes:

- a) The use of emergency and trust funds. These funds were approved by the voters to reduce taxes. Currently the district has \$1.2 million dollars in these funds.
- b) Offer a retirement incentive. The teacher's union surveyed the faculty and 17 teachers would consider retirement if there were an incentive, perhaps resulting in savings of \$200K to \$400K.
- c) Further cuts in the capital operating budget, perhaps as much as \$250 - \$400K
- d) Savings from health insurance. The guaranteed maximum is 8.4%. Historically, the GMP often comes in lower, therefore any savings can be used to offset taxes. Historically, this could result in a savings of \$50K to \$100K.

The Superintendent shared the bond amount for year 3 is not nearly as high and likely can be absorbed in the normal budget process.

Finally, the working payments on the bond uses 3% as the interest rate. The most recent issues by the bond bank was at 2.17% so savings will be had once the bond is actually issued in July 2020.

Board member Michael Williams added that the Board intends to issue the bond in two halves, half in July 2020 and the other half in July 2021, thus paying only the interest on the bond for the first three years which minimizes increase in taxes.

The Superintendent shared the School Board has worked on the proposed middle school concept for over five years. As a result of there careful thought, the proposed middle school meets the academic, safety/wellness and sustainability goals of the Board and with the issue of spreading the tax impact over 5 years so there are no great spikes in taxes.

Jim stated the alternative would have been to issue the entire bond in July with a crushing tax increase the following year as is the tradition. The School Board rejected that option.

Jim explained that on the web page pertaining to the middle school the Frequently Asked Questions has grown considerably, and he has sat down with Josh, our IT Director to place a hot button on the front of the webpage dealing with the bond and finances, on the proposed middle school.

ORYA Meeting:

Jim updated the Board that he and Todd are scheduled to meet with the ORYA Board of Directors this Friday.

Dan Klein asked Jim if there have been any correspondences sent or clarification given by ORYA correcting the misinformation that was given to parents. Dr. Morse replied that no clarification has been sent. Dan expressed concern that some community members may go to the polls on March 10 believing the misinformation to be accurate.

Jim stated that they will be meeting on Friday and we will wait to find out.

Todd stated that he spoke directly with Matt and was given dates for Jim to meet, but they fell on vacation week and a Board meeting night and that is how they picked the Friday date.

Andy Lathrop stated that he, Jim Rozycki and Stacy met with both organizations surrounding the spring sports schedule and was very clear with what is expected. Andy stated that they were very cordial with each other.

Dan asked Jim if it would be possible to have Jim Rozycki report out at a Board meeting the process that is followed for reserving space. Dan also asked if there was a way to generate an electronic record of card usage.

Strategic Plan – Operations Update – IT – Josh Olstad

Josh referred to his memo that he included in the Board’s back up. Starting with the 1:1 laptop program for the high school. This has gone very well, there has been minimum excuses and great feedback.

Review of law and update of policies and procedures. The change in law was tiny with a tremendous impact to vendors that we use and getting them to follow NH law. We

are part of a collaboration that involves 68 school districts and 140,000 students, roughly 80%. My staff has recognized 150 apps in use which we are reviewing for personally identifiable information storage. A big thank you to the Instruction Technology Staff: Susan Leifer, Sarah Curtin, Janet Martel, Celeste Best and Kristen Hughes for their contributions to this work of identifying applications.

Josh spoke about the Schoology program that will help teachers be more efficient with digital resources in their classrooms. This program has been successfully synchronized with Power School.

Al Howland stated that there is a great relationship between Power School and Schoology that parents need to be made aware.

Upgrade of network switches and firewalls.

Josh showed a picture of the past and current switches that his team has worked diligently to upgrade and organize. For the firewalls it was reviewed and decided that this can wait for another year.

Assisting with technology needs planning for new middle school.

This is an ongoing goal with attendance at several planning meetings. I am also willing to speak with vendors about classroom technology.

The IT department is working on additional ongoing projects.

I will also like to thank my team, Sue Johnson, Alexander Taylor, Bruce Stocker, Robert McCann, Jon Koelker, and Ryan Moriarty for all of their hard work.

C. Business Administrator: None

D. Student Senate Report: None

E. Other: - None

VII. DISCUSSION ITEM: None

VIII. ACTIONS

A. Superintendent Action Items: None

B. Board Action Items:

Tom Newkirk asked the Board if they had a chance to review his letter to the editor and gave them a moment to look it over before discussing it. The Board suggested certain revisions to the correspondence before approval.

**Motion to authorize the release of Tom Newkirk's letter to the editor:
Revisions/Questions:**

Denise Day made a motion to authorize the release of Tom Newkirk's letter to the editor as amended, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion Approved. Vote 7-0.

**Motion to approve List of Policies for first read.
Revisions/Questions:**

Kenny asked if Policy EEAEA should contain verbiage about the legalization of cannabis?

Michael Williams stated that it was covered in the Legal References.

Michael Williams suggested that on Policy EEA on the first page under Responsibilities in the first sentence that the following statement be added "after the student" making the new sentence read ... until the student embarks and after the student disembarks from the school vehicle.

In the same policy on page 2 9th paragraph remove the heading "3rd and 4th grade Procedure

Denise Day made a motion to approve the List of Policies as a slate for first read as amended, 2nd by Brian Cisneros Motion Approved. Vote 7-0.

X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

A. Manifests Reviewed and Approved by Manifest Committee:

Tom Newkirk and Brian Cisneros reviewed the manifests.

Payroll Manifest #16 \$939,145.12
Vendor Manifest #18: \$244,793.54

Denise Day and Dan Klein will be the next Board members to review manifest.

Dan asked if a change in the way that manifest is reviewed can be changed to a manifest summary reviewed by the whole Board.

Tom suggested that we wait for the new term for this discussion.

Kenny Rotner reported out that the Sabbatical Committee reviewed three requests and they are in the process of finalizing a decision.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bill Hall of Durham reiterated the cost in savings in energy for the new middle school that would benefit taxpayers as energy prices soared. He stated the sustainability aspects of the school and the savings to taxpayers is understated.

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS:

- A. Future Meeting Dates: 3/4/20 – Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library 7:00 PM
3/10/20 Voting Day
3/18/20 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library 7:00 PM
4/1/20 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Library 7:00 PM

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II {If Needed}
NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A:2 I {If Needed}**

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Michael Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m., 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy L. DiFruscio
Executive Assistant to
Superintendent of Schools