

**Oyster River Cooperative School Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**April 21, 2021**

**DRAFT**

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

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Jay Richard, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith, Catherine Plourde, Suzanne Filippone

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rheanna Cote

**GUEST PRESENT:**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Michael Williams notified the Board that a non-public session would be added to the end of the meeting. Brian Cisneros brought up the vote from the meeting on April 7, 2021 where it was determined the unanimous consent agenda would be moved behind discussion items. Michael Williams and Denise Day stated the agenda change is part of a policy change the Board will be voting on for a first read later in the meeting.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to move unanimous consent to follow district reports for this meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 6-1 with Denise Day voting in the negative.**

**Michael Williams moved to approve the agenda as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Denise Day moved to approve Workshop Minutes from March 31, 2021 as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0.**

**Denise Day moved to approve Regular Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Williams.**

**Michael Williams asked that the entire unanimous consent agenda be included in the meeting minutes.**

**The vote to amend the April 7, 2021 minutes passed 7-0.**

**Denise Day moved to approve Non-Public Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2021 as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0.**

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

Brian Cisneros thanked the members of the Board that were able to tour the new middle school to see the progress that has been made over the last few weeks.

Tom Newkirk praised Dr. Morse for the amount of writing he has done in response to the letters and emails received this year.

Yusi Turell recognized the teachers, staff, and administrators that received their second vaccination shot, and is looking forward to the district starting back at school normally.

Michael Williams presented Tom Newkirk with a proposed proclamation and plaque for his work and dedication to the school district and school Board, recognizing Tom's accomplishments.

**Michael Williams moved to recognize Tom Newkirk for his service as Chair of the Oyster River School Board and to the Oyster River Community in appreciation of his leadership for the last seven years, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 6-0-1, with Tom Newkirk abstaining.**

**VI. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA** – Moved to follow District Reports.

**VII. DISTRICT REPORTS**

**A. Assistant Superintendent / Curriculum & Instruction Report(s)**

Todd Allen was joined by Jay Richard and Rheanna Cote to discuss what they hope to accomplish by utilizing ESSER II funds in the hiring of a fourth counselor for the middle school. Jay Richard went on to explain the new middle school was designed to provide the space for this fourth counselor, and that a primary focus of professional development this summer will be how to provide adequate services to students returning to school regularly. Rheanna Cote spoke to the Board regarding the positive impact having a fourth counselor would have on meeting the needs of the students throughout their middle school years.

**Denise Day move to use ESSER II funds to create a fourth counselor position at the middle school, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0.**

**B. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Morse started by providing an update on the progress of the grandstand assembly on Coe Drive, which will allow outdoor graduation. Dr. Morse is continuing to work with Yusi Turell on the Asian-American and Pacific Islander Forum, which is planned to take place on May 25, 2021 and they will release more details as the event gets closer. Dr. Morse also reminded the Board that the pandemic is not over and it is still important to take safety precautions, citing the current outbreak in another school district, as well as the loss of the Oyster River varsity baseball team due to an exposure.

ORCSD Opening 04/22/21

Dr. Morse and Todd Allen visited the schools in the district prior to their openings, and commended the principals, teachers, and custodians for their hard work in preparing the buildings for the return of students.

Misty Lowe discussed the opening of Mast Way and their preparedness for serving lunch indoors and providing outdoor learning opportunities wherever possible to the approximately 80% of students returning, while the other 20% will remain remote.

David Goldsmith thanked the Board for allowing them time to discuss the logistics of students returning to school and how to make it a smooth transition for the 266 in-person and 26 remote students.

Jay Richard discussed the social distancing students will be able to maintain from one another, as well as the ability to be able to offer world language and music courses to the students upon their return.

Suzanne Filippone discussed the high school social distancing with 76% of students returning to the high school and 24% of students staying remote. Suzanne has had an email sent to families with reminders and more information for student return, as well as posting the new schedule.

Dr. Morse reminded families that buses will be running new routes and may need a few weeks to settle, and students will be offered breakfast and lunch at school for the remainder of the school year and next year for free. Dr. Morse also disclosed that families will be able to attend student sporting events so long as they are socially distanced and wearing masks. The interviews for Assistant Superintendent have completed and there will be a nomination for the position brought forth at the May 5, 2021 meeting.

#### Fall Planning – Begin Discussion

Dr. Morse would like the school Board to bring questions to him that they would like answered regarding how they will begin the 2021-2022 school year so logistical planning can begin. It is expected that a large number of high school, and potentially middle school, students will be vaccinated at that time.

#### HB544 Petition

Dr. Morse discussed the Divisive Topics Bill and the subject matter it would prevent the school system from teaching to students, should it be put into effect. Dr. Morse and Yusi Turell reached out to New Hampshire Businesses for Local Responsibility with a proposal to join in an effort to resist the bill, should it be voted into power in New Hampshire. Dr. Morse asked the Board if they would support joining efforts with New Hampshire Businesses for Local Responsibility in fighting the bill.

**Yusi Turell moved to have the school Board sign a letter of opposition by the New Hampshire Businesses for Social Responsibility and reach out to other districts in united opposition, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0.**

### **C. Finance Committee Report**

Al Howland discussed the current fund balance, upcoming obligations, and the options available for the year end balance. Brian Cisneros added that the committee is trying to juggle some of next year's projects to bring into this year's fund balance, and the balance will become more solidified as we know the end of year expenses. The Board should expect

to vote on the new finance policy either the second Board meeting in May or the first Board meeting in June. Dr. Morse asked the finance committee to investigate acquiring a proposed policy and sending it to the Policy Committee for refining.

**D. Business Administrator**

Sue Caswell brought forth the annual transportation bid to lease two 77 passenger buses and Lisa's recommendation.

**Brian Cisneros moved to accept the five-year lease of two buses as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0.**

**E. Student Representative Report:** None

**F. Other:** None

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA** – Moved from beginning of meeting to this location.

Michael Williams asked to remove Policy ECFA – Environmental Sustainability item from this agenda for additional clarification.

**Michael Williams moved to approve the unanimous consent agenda, including the approval of Moharimet Maternity Leave of Absence from 9/27/21 to January 31, 2022 and the second reading adoption of policies BBAA – School Board Member Authority, and BDD – Board Superintendent Relationship, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.**

**VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Amended Guild Memorandum of Agreement

Dr. Morse stated the Guild successfully negotiated modifications to the Memorandum of Agreement they have had since last August. The biggest changes were changing social distancing from six feet to three feet, the agreement will follow any changes the CDC will put forward, and the current language will carry into summer school given we are still in a pandemic. Dr. Morse recommended the Board approve the Memorandum of Agreement.

**Denise Day moved to approve the amended Memorandum of Agreement between the school district and the Teachers' Guild as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell. Motion passed 7-0.**

Update on Chinese Program

Dr. Morse discussed the history of the Chinese program, and the relationship between the district and the Confucius Institute. As the relationship between UNH and the Confucius Institute will be ending on July 1, 2021, the district must find a way to continue the program. Yige from the Confucius Institute has formed a partnership with a university in China, and through a non-profit in China would provide the funding for two Chinese language teachers in the District. Dr. Morse expressed his concern with continuing to fund the program with soft funding and wants to have a conversation with the Board about the possibility of rearranging the budget to find a solution.

Michael Williams called a 6-minute break at 9:07 PM.

The Board returned at 9:15 PM.

#### Scheduling Board/ Community Forums

Michael Williams stated that during their self-evaluation workshop the Board had wanted to do some less structured Board events with the community and would like to schedule something before the end of the school year. The meeting would be considered a workshop and will be mainly focused on preparing a plan for the fall. The ability to maintain three-foot social distancing was discussed, as well as potentially having the meeting recorded instead of live. Michael Williams will work with Dr. Morse and Wendy to find a date that will work for the workshop and bring to the school Board on May 5, 2021.

### **IX. ACTIONS**

**A. Superintendent Actions:** None

**B. Board Action Items**

#### List of Policies

Michael Williams stated he wanted to remove the Policy ECFA – Environmental Sustainability from the Unanimous Consent Agenda as he believed it should be on the agenda for first read, not second.

Denise Day shows ECFA – Environmental Sustainability for second read, however the agenda itself should be showing as a second read for tonight as well.

After looking into the matter further, it was determined that ECFA – Environmental Sustainability is being voted for second read.

**Michael Williams moved to approve Policy ECFA – Environmental Sustainability for second read/Adoption, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.**

Michael Williams corrected that BEDB & R & R<sub>1</sub> – Agenda Preparation/Format/Agenda Request should appear for second read and not as first read. Michael wanted to be sure there were no further questions.

**Denise Day moved to approve Policy BEDB & R & R<sub>1</sub> – Agenda Preparation/Format/Agenda Request for second read, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed, 7-0.**

**Denise Day moved to approve Policy ACA – Racism & Anti-Racism for first read, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell.**

Discussion:

Denise Day stated a corrected copy of ACA – Racism & Anti-Racism was sent separate from the meeting's packet reflecting the changes that were voted on last meeting.

Brian Cisneros asked why the beginning of the policy starts with a quote when it does not seem policy related.

Dr. Morse stated he believed it was the goal of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to be sure the preamble matched their intent, and they felt that the quote said what they wanted to say, only better.

Tom Newkirk offered a word change on item 2 – “availability and incarceration”.

Tom Newkirk offered an edit on item 7 to strike “for teaching faculty positions”.

Michael Williams stated that there are three pages with the number one.

Denise Day clarified that “We support in the words of” will be added before the quote.

**Policy ACA as amended passed as a second read/adoption with a vote of 7-0.**

**Denise Day moved to approve Policy BCA – School Board Member Ethics for first read, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros.**

Discussion:

Yusi Turell asked for clarification on the removal of line three from the original policy.

Dr. Morse explained it was because the phrase seemed inconsistent with the rest of the policy.

Tom Newkirk offered a word change on number eight – remove the second occurrence of the word “clearly” in the last sentence.

**Policy BCA as amended passed for a first read with a vote of 7-0.**

**Denise Day moved to approve Policy BHC – Board-Employee Communications for first read, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros.**

Discussion:

Michael Williams offered an edit to the middle paragraph – change “and the guild” to “and any collective bargaining unit”.

Denise Day offered a minor change of “authority” to “authorized”.

Yusi Turell questioned the clarity of the last sentence of the first paragraph of the policy, suggested it become its own paragraph.

After discussion on the intent and clarity of the policy, the Board decided to make the last sentence of paragraph one its own paragraph.

**Policy BHC as amended passed for a first read with a vote of 7-0.**

## **X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Michael Williams moved to recommend to the Board Denise Day and Tom Newkirk for Manifest Review Committee, with Dan Klein serving as an alternate, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.**

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**XII. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future meeting dates:** May 5, & May 19, 2021 Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium

**XIII. NON-PUBLIC MEETING SESSION**

- Potential Litigation

**NON-MEETING SESSION {If Needed}**

**Michael Williams moved to enter nonpublic session at 9:42 p.m.in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (e) – Consideration or negotiation of pending legal claim or litigation, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.**

Chair Williams declared the School Board back in public session at 10:05 PM.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT:**

Brian Cisneros moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 PM, 2nd by Yusi Turell. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alexa Fusilier  
Recording Secretary